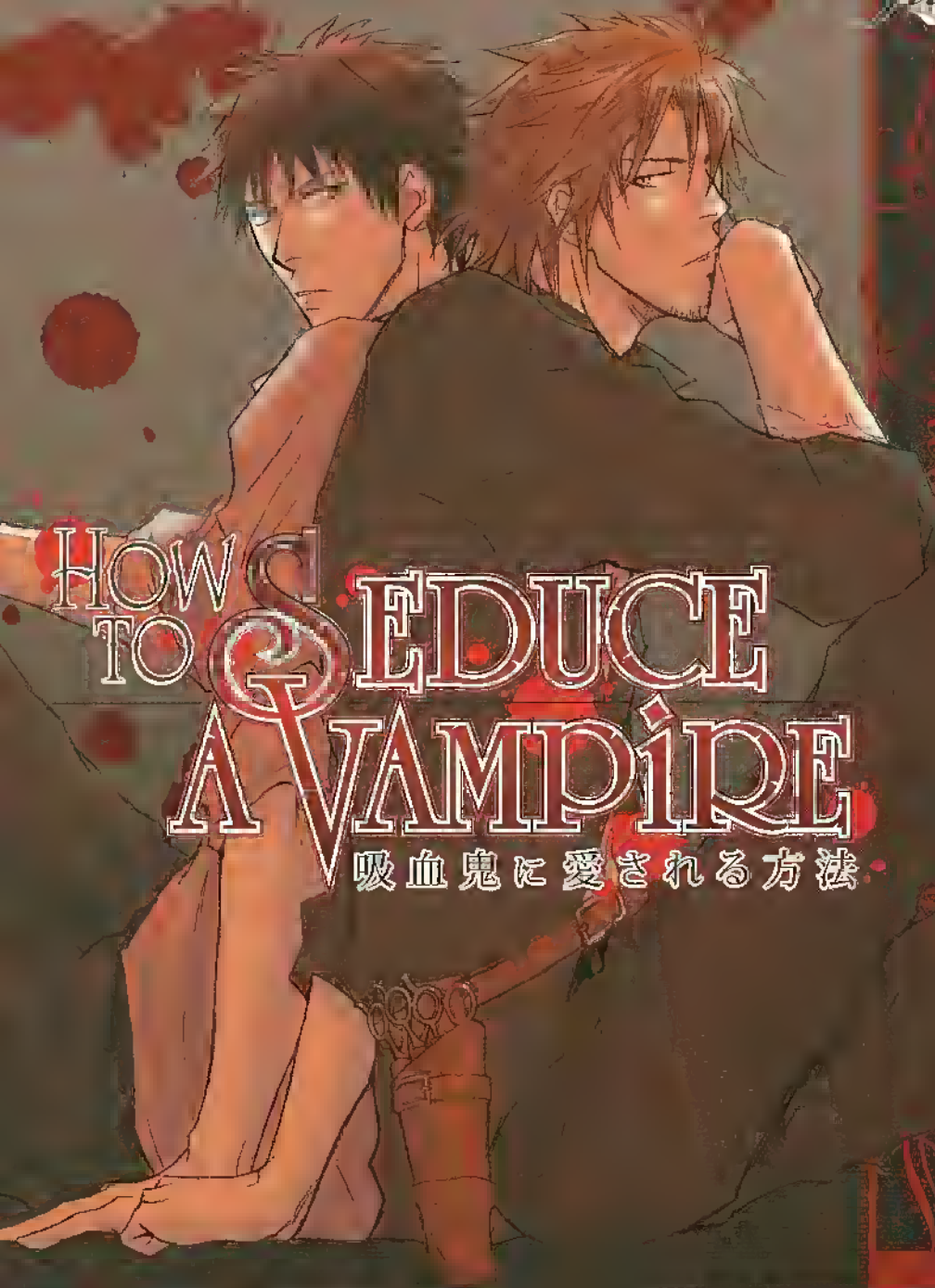


• NIMOSAKU SHIMADA



HOW TO SEDUCE A VAMPIRE

吸血鬼に愛される方法

HOW TO SEDUCE A VAMPIRE

吸血鬼に愛される方法

On a day like any other, young Watanabe spots an injured man collapsed by a bridge on his way to work and stops to lend a hand. But despite his selfless attempt to do a good deed, an on-the-job "blood incident" makes Watanabe late and costs him his job. When the injured man awakens his senses, he claims to be no less than a vampire who owns a high-end hair salon...and he'd like to hire the baffled Watanabe. The goody-goody senses a lurking danger whenever he's near Mizuki, but he can't seem to tear himself away from his beautiful boss. Will haircut be their only business...or will someone's precious life soon be cut short?

How to Seduce a Vampire spans history and hairstyles to deliver a drop-dead passionate (and freakishly funny) tale of the ties that bind a demon-boss and an unassuming employee! Watanabe and Mizuki are caught in an eternal dance of love and war, and the strike of lightning fate has the power to unite their destinies...or sever their bond forever! Will the vampire mete mortal and a seductive monster continue the sweet, tantalizing dance of desire? And who on earth needs a shampoo and haircut when they can have a date?

MANGA / DRAMA / COMIC / ANIME
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WITH IT
AND YOUR
SKILL, I AM
SURE EVEN
DEMONS
WILL BE NO
MATCH
FOR YOU.

SO I GIVE
YOU THIS
KAMIKIRI
(HAIR-
CUTTING)
TACHI FOR
YOUR
PROTEC-
TION.

BUT THERE
ARE RUMORS
OF DEMONS
LURKING ON
THE ROAD
RECENTLY...

TSUNA,
I NEED YOU
TO GO ON
AN ERRAND
TO ICHIJYO
OHMIYA.

ABOUT 1,000 YEARS AGO IN KYOTO



SIR
SAMURAI --



PLEASE --

I MUST
GET TO
GOJYO,
BUT THE
SUN HAS
FALLEN
AND I FEAR
FOR MY
LIFE...



I THANK
YOU,
KIND
SIR.

CAN YOU
RIDE? I
SHALL
ESCORT
YOU.

A WOMAN
TRAVELING
ALONE AT
NIGHT?
THAT WILL
NOT DO.

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吸血鬼に愛される方法

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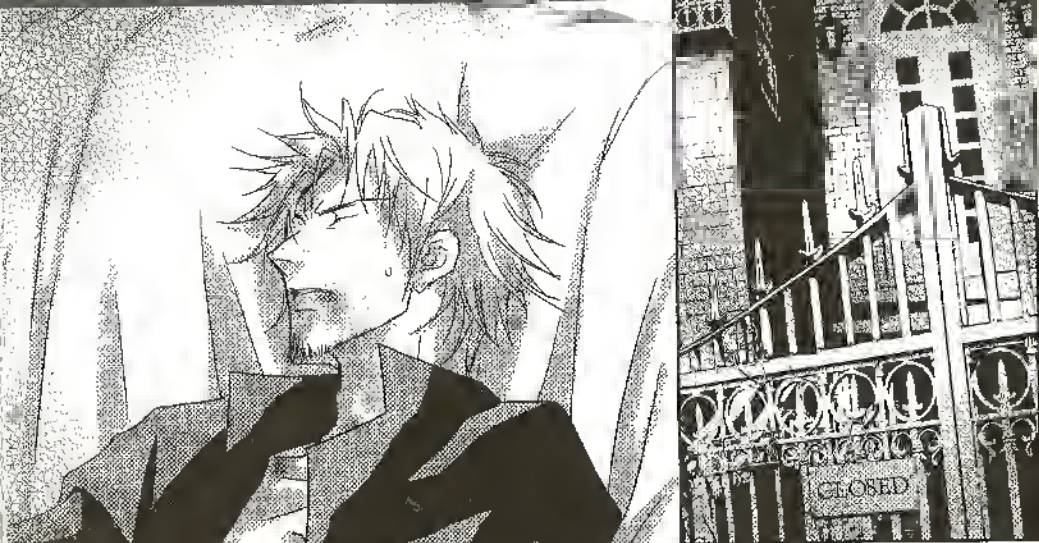
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THAT'S NOT THE POINT! WITH ALL THE BLOOD, YOU MUST BE SEVERELY WOUNDED —

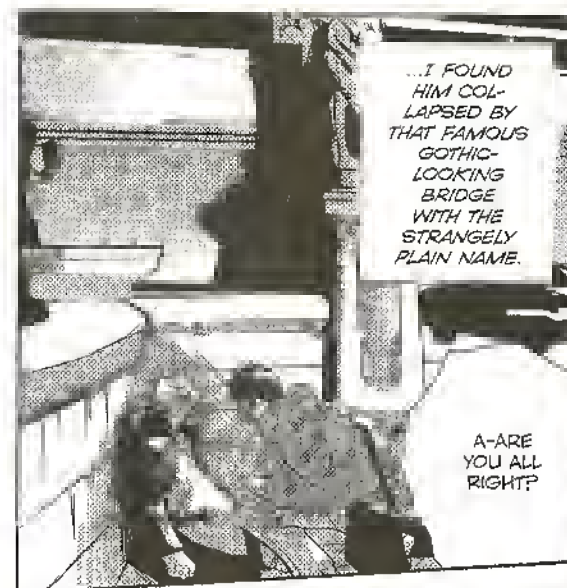
...IT'S FINE. THIS IS MY PLACE.

HEY — YOU REALIZE YOU HAD ME BRING YOU TO A BEAUTY SALON AND NOT A HOSPITAL, RIGHT?!

THIS IS NO TIME FOR VANITY!

...IT'S NOT FROM A WOUND... BUT NEVER MIND THAT —

I NEED A TRANSFUSION — RIGHT NOW.



...I FOUND HIM COLLAPSED BY THAT FAMOUS GOTHIC-LOOKING BRIDGE WITH THE STRANGELY PLAIN NAME.

A-ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?



WHEN I FIRST MET HIM —



...!
NO...!

SHOULD I CALL AN AMBU-LANCE?



...DON'T...



HUH...P
...WHY
WOULDN'T
I BE?

WHY ARE
YOU
STILL
ALIVE?

...THAT'S
WHAT I
SHOULD BE
ASKING
YOU.

WHAT
ABOUT
YOUR
WOUND?!

IT'S
SHALLOW
...HMM -
DID I
MISS?



-SIGH-
SO
TERRIBLE,
GETTING
OLD...

HUH
...?

AH, I SEE...
I MUST HAVE
BEEN TOO
TIRED AND
CONKED OUT
HALFWAY
THROUGH.

YOU'RE
THE ONE
WHO WAS
HURT...

WHAT
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?!



WELL...
I WAS...
SURROUNDED
BY SOME
STRANGE-
LOOKING
MEN...

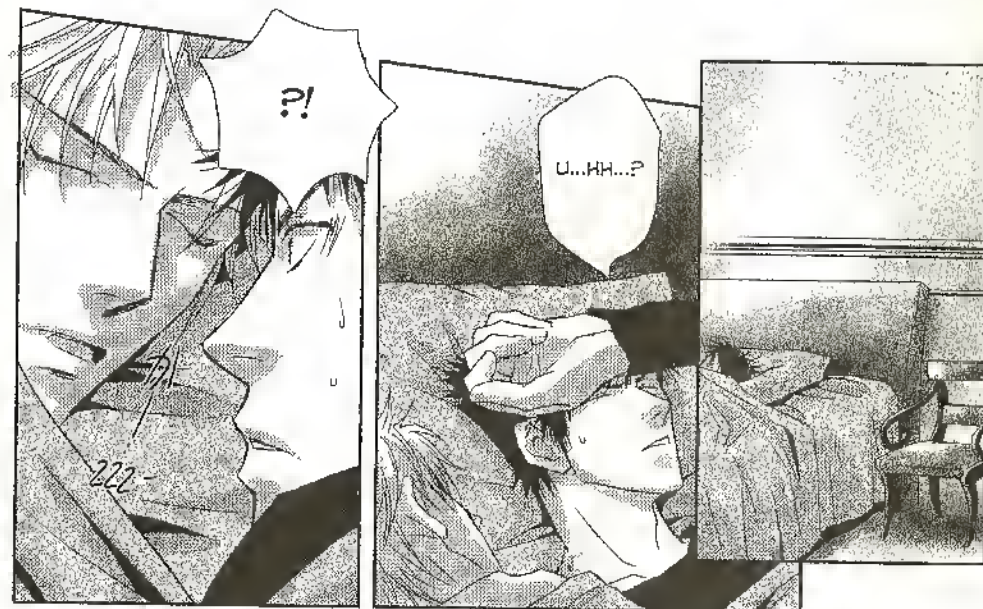
OH...

WHY
DID YOU
COL-
LAPSE IN
A PLACE
LIKE
THAT?

YOU SEEM
IN BETTER
HEALTH
THAN I
THOUGHT,
BUT...

THANK
YOU FOR
EARLIER.
YOU
SAVED
ME.

NEVER
MIND.
BY THE
WAY -

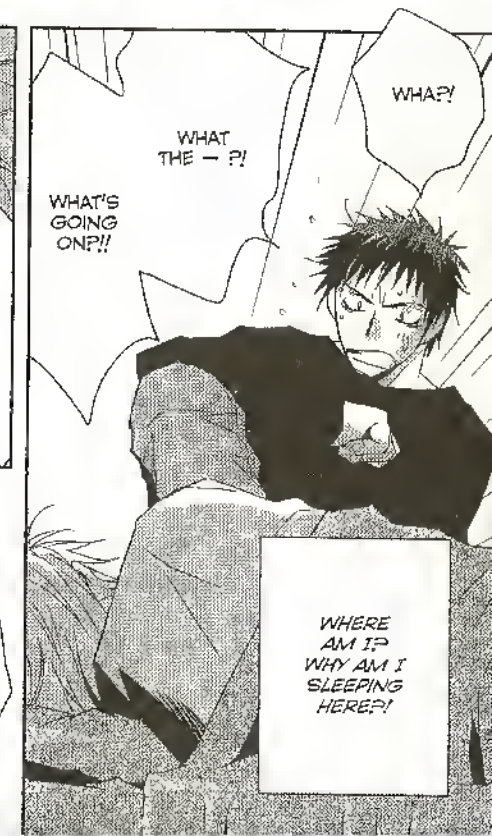


?!
222

U...HH...?



...MORNING.



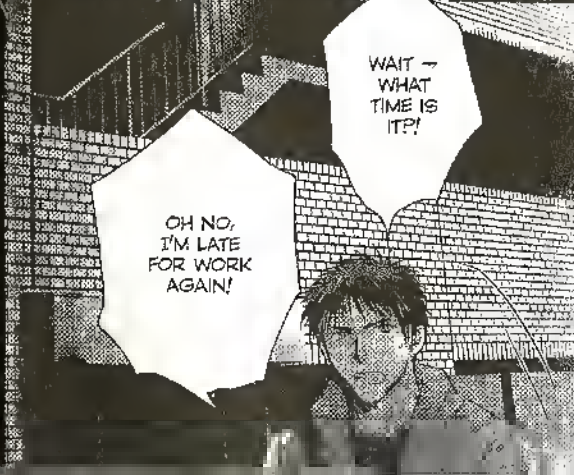
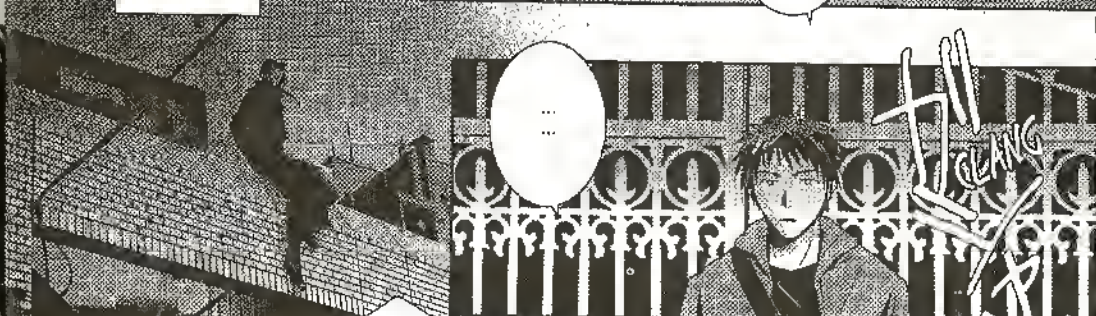
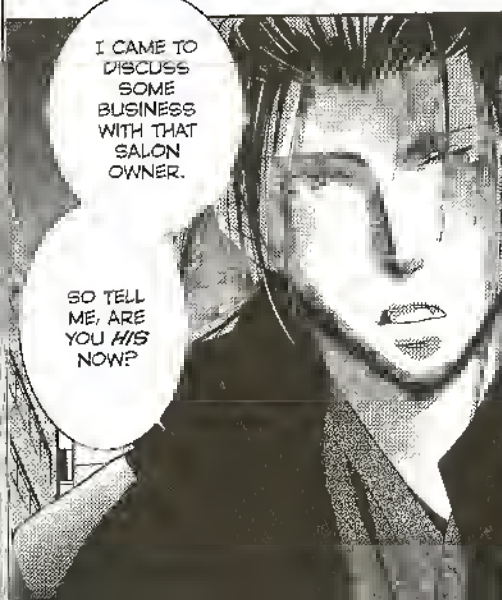
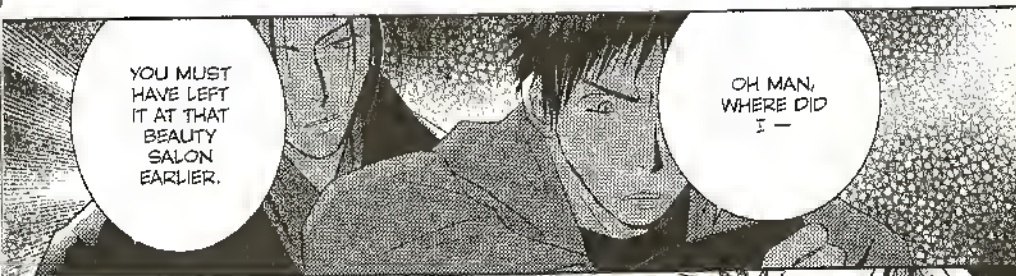
WHAP!

WHAT
THE - ?!

WHAT'S
GOING
ON?!!

UM...
"MORNING"...P

WHERE
AM I?
WHY AM I
SLEEPING
HERE?!





I SWEAR,
YOUNG 'UNS
THESE
DAYS —

YOU'VE
GOT NO
RESPECT.

!!

HRAGH!

SQUELCH

YOU JUST
PRANCE
INTO
SOMEONE
ELSE'S
TERRITORY
LIKE IT'S
NOTHING.



HE'S A
BAD MAN,
YOU
KNOW.

RUNNING
OFF WITH
OUR
COMPANY'S
MONEY LIKE
THAT...

WHAT DO
YOU
MEAN...?

W-WHO
IS THIS?
WHERE'S
HE FROM?
HE'S GOT
A SLIGHT
ACCENT...

ISN'T THAT
WHAT'S
HAPPENED,
SINCE
YOU'RE
STILL ALIVE?

...WHAT?

SORRY
FOR
HAVING
TO DO
THIS TO
A "NEW-
BORN"
LIKE YOU,
BUT...

AFTER
ALL, HE'S
ENOUGH
OF A
HANDFUL
TO DEAL
WITH
ALONE.

AND MORE
ALLIES FOR
HIM MEANS
MORE OF A
PAIN IN THE
ASS FOR
ME.

I'M KIND
OF
AFTER
HIM.

WHAT IS HE,
CHINESE
MAFIA OR
SOMETHING?!

WAIT A
MINUTE —
COULD THIS BE
ONE OF THE
"SCARY GUYS"
HE MEN-
TIONED...?

YOU SURE
YOU'VE GOT
THE RIGHT
PERSON...?

I...REALLY
HAVE NO
IDEA WHAT
YOU'RE
TALKING
ABOUT.

I'LL
HAVE TO
TAKE
YOUR
LIFE —

YOU LEFT
YOUR CELL
PHONE
BEHIND AT
MY PLACE,
DIDN'T YOU?

IT SEEMED
AS IF THE
MAN SAW
SOMEONE
ELSE IN ME.

INSTEAD,
I FOUND
MYSELF
FOLLOWING
HIM BACK
TO HIS
PLACE.

...I SHOULD
HAVE SAID
TO MYSELF,
"FORGET
THE CELL
PHONE AND
JUST RUN!"

THINKING
BACK
ON IT
NOW...

SHOULDN'T
YOU CALL
THE POLICE
OR SOME-
THING...?

UH, NO,
IT'S
JUST...

WHAT'S
WRONG?
HE WON'T
BE ABLE TO
COME BACK
TO LIFE
AGAIN, SO
DON'T
WORRY.

THAT GUY YOU
JUST MET —
HE'S FROM A
NEFARIOUS
LITTLE GROUP
I WAS
INVOLVED
WITH IN
MY PAST.

I REALLY
DIDN'T
MEAN TO
GET YOU
INVOLVED.
I'M SORRY.

THE POLICE?
ISN'T THIS
OUTSIDE THEIR
JURISDICTION?
YOU HAVE NO
LAWS FOR
SOMEONE
LIKE HIM.

THE MAN
TOLD ME
HIS NAME
IS MIZUO.
HE'S A HAIR
STYLIST.

AFTER
ALL, HE
WASN'T
HUMAN.

...AND
NEITHER
AM I.

FOR
A BRIEF
INSTANT —

WELL...
ALL RIGHT
THEN,
WATANABE-
KUN.

MASATSUNA
...YOU SAY?

WATA-
NABE...

YEAH,
FIRST
NAME'S
MASAT-
SUNA...

WATA-
NABE...?

W...

WHAT'S
YOUR
NAME?

REMEMBER
ME, DO YOU?
THERE AREN'T
MANY
WHO CAN
WITHSTAND
MY MIND-
ERASING
TRICK.

Y-YOU'RE
—...!

AT LEAST
DO SOME
GOOD
AND
BECOME
PART OF
MY FLESH.

WHAT...?
HOW DOES HE
KNOW ABOUT
MY (LOST)
JOB? CAN I
REALLY TRUST
HIM...?

YOU'D MAINLY
BE HANDLING
THE FRONT
DESK, BUT I'LL
PAY WELL...
CONSIDER IT A
WAY OF BUYING
YOUR SILENCE.

AS IT SO
HAPPENS,
YOU'RE UN-
EMPLOYED
AT THE
MOMENT -
RIGHT?

BUT I GUESS
THE BEST THING
TO DO IS TO
KEEP ON A
POTENTIAL
KILLER'S GOOD
SIDE...

OH, I'M
WORRIED
ALL RIGHT -

OH, AND I
DON'T PREY
ON MY
EMPLOYEES,
SO DON'T
WORRY.

HIS SHOP HOURS
ARE ODD -
HE OPENS AT
SUNSET AND
WORKS THROUGH
THE NIGHT.

BUT IT MUST BE
CONVENIENT FOR
CUSTOMERS ON
THEIR WAY HOME
FROM WORK WHO
OTHERWISE HAVE
NO TIME FOR A
SALON VISIT.

AFRAID
I'D BE HIS
DINNER ON
THE SPOT
IF I RE-
FUSED -

...I TOOK
HIM UP
ON HIS
OFFER.

NO, I'M
A NIGHT
PERSON,
ACTUALLY.
I'M FINE.

NICE
WORK.
SLEEPY?

BEST OF
ALL, HE'S
LETTING
ME LIVE...
FOR NOW.

OUR BODIES
DISINTEGRATE
QUITE QUICKLY
UPON DEATH.
PROBABLY NOT
EVEN A TRACE
OF HIS CORPSE
LEFT BY NOW.

WHAAAAT
---?!

WE'RE
WHAT I
GUESS
YOU'D CALL
"VAMPIRES,"
SEE?

OH...
I SEE.

WHY SO
SUR-
PRISED?
YOU SAW
WHAT HAP-
PENED
EARLIER.

I NEVER
IMAGINED
THEY'D ATTACK
YOU TO GET
TO ME. I
APOLOGIZE.

...THERE
WAS A BIT
OF A HITCH
WITH THE
MONEY AND
SO FORTH.

I
THOUGHT
I HAD A
HANDLE
ON THE
PROBLEM,
BUT...

HE TOLD
YOU HE
WAS
AFTER
ME, RIGHT?

B-BUT WHY?!
I'M JUST AN
INNOCENT BY-
STANDER! I'VE
GOT NOTHING
TO DO WITH ANY
OF THIS!!

IT MIGHT
BE SAFER
FOR YOU
TO STAY
WITH ME.

W-
WHAT?!

WHAT
AM I
SAYING?

I SHOULD
BE, HIGH-
TAILING
IT RIGHT
OUT OF
HERE -

I-IT'S ALL
RIGHT...
YOU
SAVED
ME, TOO,
SO -...

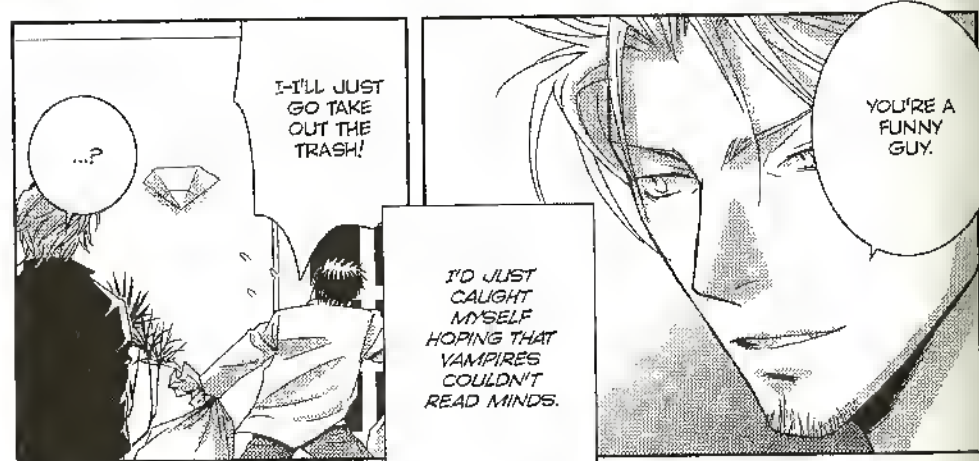
SORRY,
BUT
YOU'RE
INVOLVED
NOW.

BY THE WAY,
HOW'D YOU
LIKE TO
WORK FOR
ME HERE?
LIVE-IN, OF
COURSE.



KUHP OH...
UH, IT'S
NOTHING!

...WHY
ARE YOU
BLUSHING?



I-I'll JUST
GO TAKE
OUT THE
TRASH!

...?

YOU'RE A
FUNNY
GUY.

I'D JUST
CAUGHT
MYSELF
HOPING THAT
VAMPIRES
COULDN'T
READ MINDS.



CHILL OUT.
IT'S NOT
SOMETHING
I DO
FREQUENTLY.



YEAH, ALL
YOU GUYS
ARE LATELY.
AND NOW
HUNTING AT
NIGHT IS SO
DIFFICULT...



SOME-
TIMES WE
EVEN FALL
ASLEEP FOR
NO REASON.

...THOUGH IT
IS TRUE THAT
DAYTIME IS
DANGEROUS FOR
US, AS OUR
SENSES BECOME
DULLED AND
SLUGGISH
THEN.

REMEMBER,
IT WAS
ALREADY LIGHT
WHEN WE
FIRST MET...

OH,
THAT'S
JUST A
MYTH.

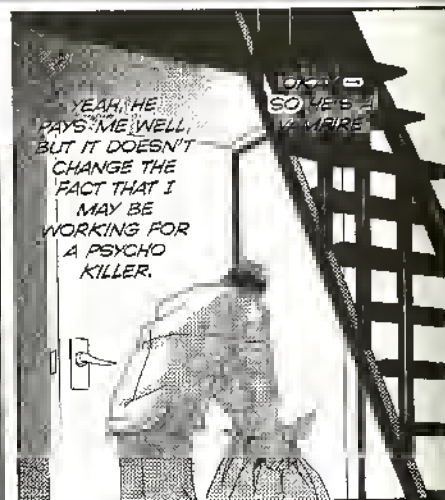


UMM...
SO IS IT
TRUE THAT
VAMPIRES
TURN INTO
ASH IN THE
SUN...?



IT'S BECAUSE
HIM'S GOT
YOU UNDER
FASCINATION.

WHAT AM I
SUPPOSED
TO DO?
WILL I BE
OKAY?
WHY DO I
STAY --

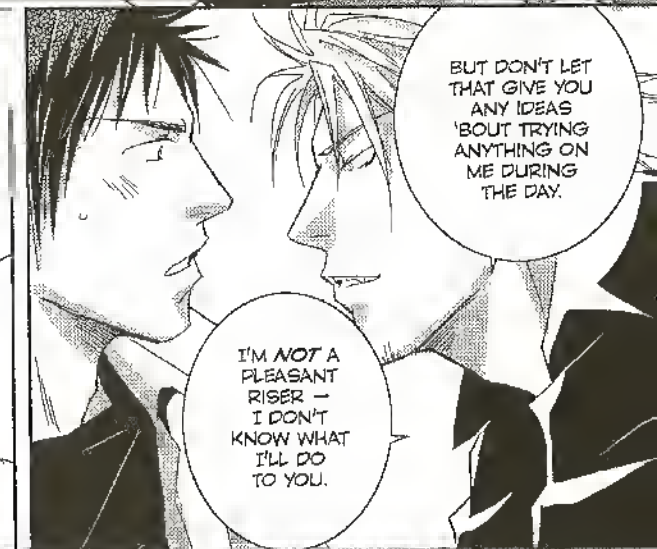


YEAH, HE
PAYS ME WELL,
BUT IT DOESN'T
CHANGE THE
FACT THAT I
MAY BE
WORKING FOR
A PSYCHO
KILLER.

SO YES I
AM A VAMPIRE

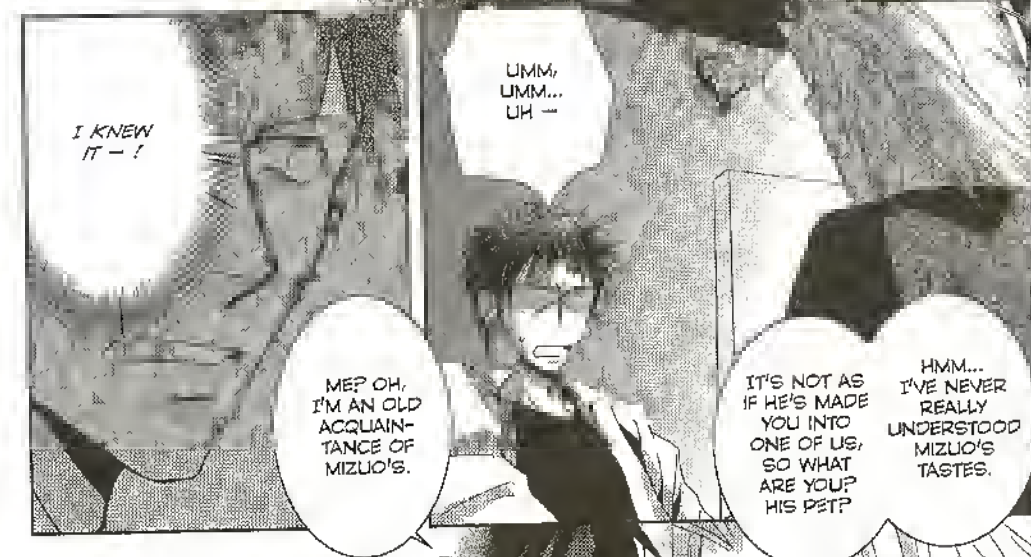
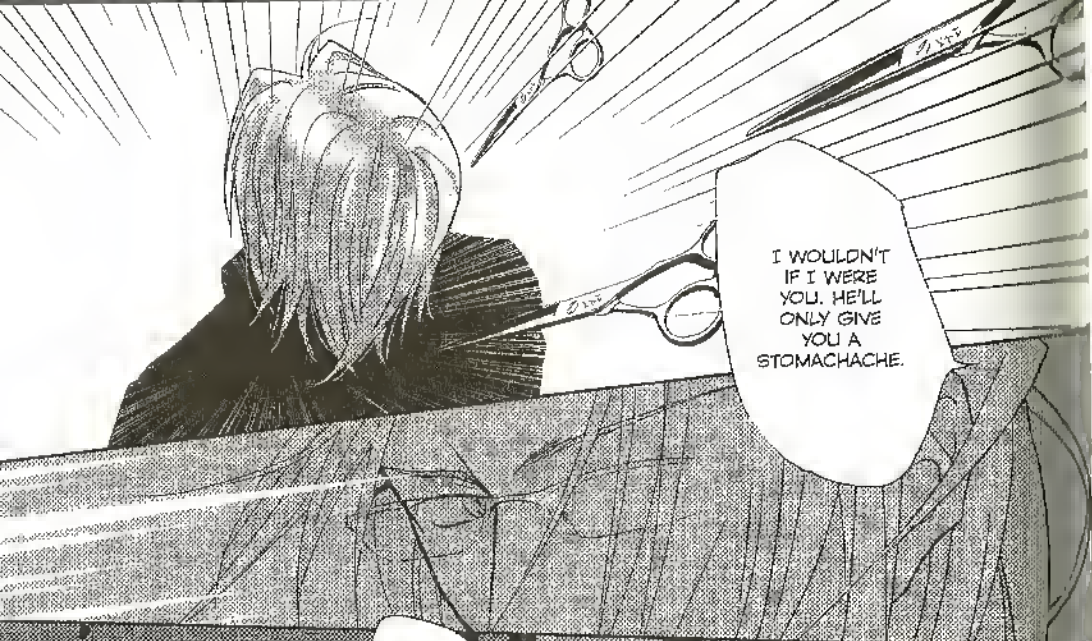


O-O-OF
COURSE I'D
NEVER TRY
ANYTHING!



I'M NOT A
PLEASANT
RISER -
I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
I'LL DO
TO YOU.

BUT DON'T LET
THAT GIVE YOU
ANY IDEAS
'BOUT TRYING
ANYTHING ON
ME DURING
THE DAY.



NO WAY...
I MEAN,
I'M JUST A
NORMAL --

SHOULD WE
MISTAKENLY
DRINK OF
YOUR BLOOD,
THERE IS EVEN
A CHANCE
THAT WE
WOULD BE
OVERPOWERED
INSTEAD.

EVERY
GENERATION
OF YOUR FAMILY
HAS BEEN
ENDOWED WITH
HIGH COMBAT
ABILITIES AGAINST
ONES LIKE US, AS
WELL AS THE
ABILITY TO RESIST
OUR POWERS.

YOUR
BLOODLINE...
IT'S MUCH
STRONGER
THAN THAT
OF MOST
PEOPLE.

ANYWAY --
WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

IF YOU'RE
LOOKING FOR
THAT KNUCKLE-
HEADED KID
WHO WAS
WANDERING
AROUND HERE
EARLIER, HE'S
GONE.

NO, NO --
FOR US, IT IS
YOU WHO
ARE THE
MONSTER.

BUT I
SEE YOUR
BLOODLINE
HAS BEEN
WEAKENED
SOMEWHAT IN
YOU. A LUCKY
THING...
EH, MIZUO?

WITH HELP
LIKE THAT,
I GUESS YOUR
ORGANIZATION'S
GONE TO THE
DOGS.

IT SEEMS
YOUNGSTERS
EVERYWHERE
THESE DAYS
HAVE NO
DISCIPLINE
OR RESPECT...
IT'S A SHAME,
REALLY.

I KNOW,
I KNOW,
TELL ME
ABOUT IT.
THAT'S WHY
I CAME --
TO MAKE
IT UP TO
YOU.

UGH. ALWAYS
BRINGING UP
THE PAST --
THAT'S WHY
EVERYONE
FINDS YOU SO
TIRESOME.

THERE WAS
A BIT OF
DISAGREE-
MENT
WITHIN
OUR
CIRCLE.

BUT SINCE
YOU BEING
ALLOWED TO
LEAVE OUR
GROUP WAS
MY SOLE
DECISION...

THAT MONEY
WAS SOMETHING
I GAVE TO YOU,
AKIN TO A
RETIREMENT
FUND OF
SORTS.

THAT
UNUSUAL
CREATURE --
IS HE A
PET OF
YOURS?

LONG TIME
NO SEE, MIZUO.
I WAS JUST
PASSING
THROUGH
JAPAN, SO I
THOUGHT I'D
PAY YOU A
VISIT.

HE'S MY
EMPLOYEE.
WHAT OF
IT?

MIZUO-
SAN!

OUR
CONTRACT
SHOULD
HAVE
EXPIRED
LONG
AGO.

WHAT
DO YOU
WANT,
LON-
YEH?

I DON'T
KNOW
WHAT YOU
MEAN.

BUT RIGHT
NOW, HE'S
ONE OF MY
STAFF. KEEP
YOUR HANDS
OFF OF HIM.

SO, WHY
KEEP HIM
ALIVE?
HE BELONGS
TO THE
BLOODLINE
OF YOUR
MORTAL
ENEMY. DOES
HE NOT?

I'M FAIRLY
SURE YOU
WON'T BE
ABLE TO
TURN HIM.

YOUR
ANCESTORS
ARE FAMOUS,
WATANABE-KUN.
DIDN'T YOU
KNOW?

"WATANABE"
...NOW I
REMEMBER
-- TSUNA.

THE
BLOODLINE
SEEMS TO
HAVE
WEAKENED,
BUT...I HAD
NO IDEA
THERE WAS
STILL ONE
OF THEM
ALIVE.

...W-WAS
THERE EVER
SOMETHING
I DID TO
YOU,
MIZUO-
SAN?

STAY
OUT OF
IT, WATA-
NABE.

UH, IT'S
OKAY...
I REALLY
DON'T
WANT
TO
KNOW.

AS FOR
WHAT I WAS
DOING
THERE -...
WELL, THAT'S
A SECRET.

LONG STORY
SHORT, HE'S
THE BOSS OF
THE BIG, BAD
BUSINESS
SYNDICATE I
USED TO BE
PART OF...

...HIS
BLOODLINE
IS THE MOST
POWERFUL
ONE IN
MAINLAND
CHINA.

...BUT I
QUESTION
THAT
NAMING
SENSE OF
YOURS...

YES, SIR!
NO
WORRIES
THERE!

SO, DID
YOU GO
RETRIEVE
MY
KAMIKIRI-
MARU,
WATANABE?

S-
SERIOUSLY?

THEY CAN
ONLY BE
SPECIALLY
FORGED BY
A CERTAIN
BLACKSMITH
AND HIS
TRADITIONAL
TECHNIQUE.

THOSE ARE
ACTUALLY
POWERFUL
WEAPONS
THAT CAN
DEAL GREAT
DAMAGE TO
MY KIND.

*Blackjack is a popular manga
character created by Osamu Tezuka.

MIZUO-
SAN,
I -

WHAT WOULD
REALLY BE
BETTER IS THE
SWORD YOUR
ANCESTORS
USED, BUT YOU
CAN'T VERY WELL
GO FLINGING
THAT AROUND.

MIZUO-
SAN...

NEEDLESS
TO SAY,
THOSE
WILL
WORK
ON ME,
TOO.

HOLD ON TO
THOSE. IF
YOU EVER
RUN INTO
SOMEONE
LIKE THAT
GUY AGAIN,
USE THEM
ON HIM.

DON'T
CALL
ME A
"BARBER,"
YOU OLD
PILE.

IF YOU ASK ME,
IT'S A WASTE
FOR ONE OF
ANCIENT BLOOD
SUCH AS YOU
TO BE PLAYING
BARBER IN A
PLACE LIKE THIS.

BUT...
I NEVER
IMAGINED YOU'D
ACTUALLY USE
THE MONEY I
GAVE YOU TO
START UP
THIS SHOP.

BUT I THINK
THEY GET IT
NOW - THERE
IS NO LONGER
ANYONE LEFT
WHO IS
POWERFUL
ENOUGH TO
KEEP SOMEONE
LIKE ME OR
YOU IN CHECK.

BUT IF YOU
EVER GET
LONESOME
FOR YOUR
OWN KIND,
COME BACK
AND SEE ME
ANYTIME.

WELL...
OUR LIVES
ARE LONG -
IT MAY BE
GOOD FOR
YOU TO TAKE
IT EASY FOR
A BIT.

AH, NOW I
REMEMBER!
YOU WERE ONCE
RAISED IN A
FAMILY OF THAT
OCCUPATION,
WEREN'T YOU?
YOU STILL HAVE A
STRANGE SENSE
OF LOYALTY,
I SEE.

A-ARE
YOU OKAY,
MIZUO-
SAN?

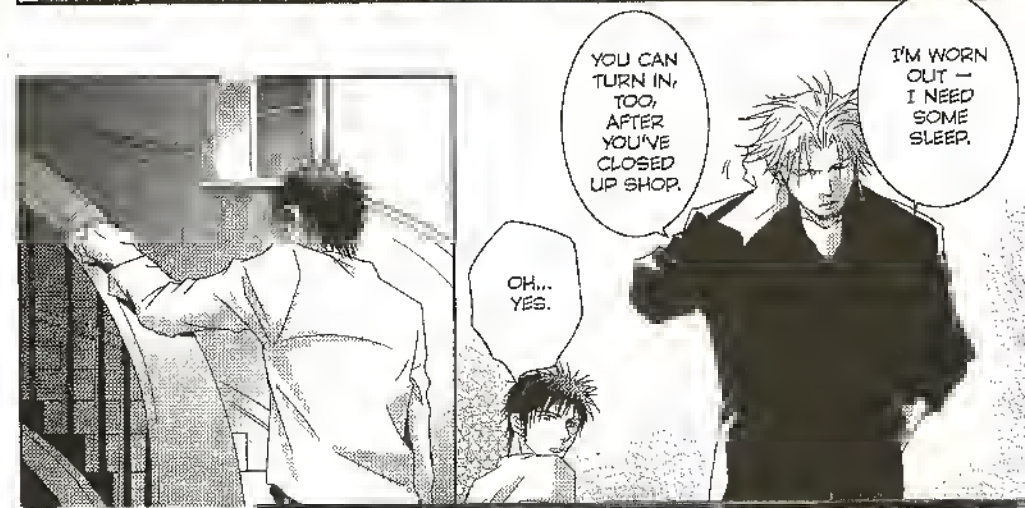
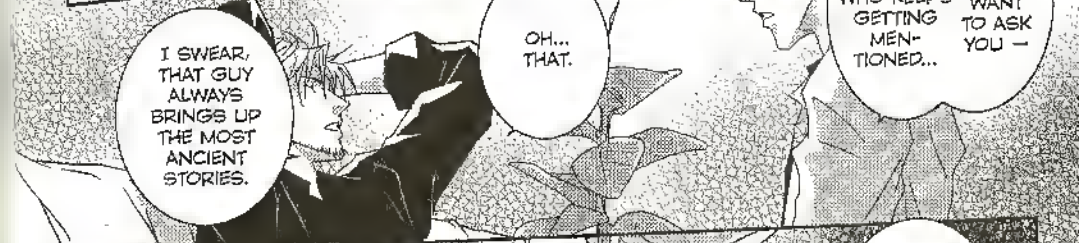
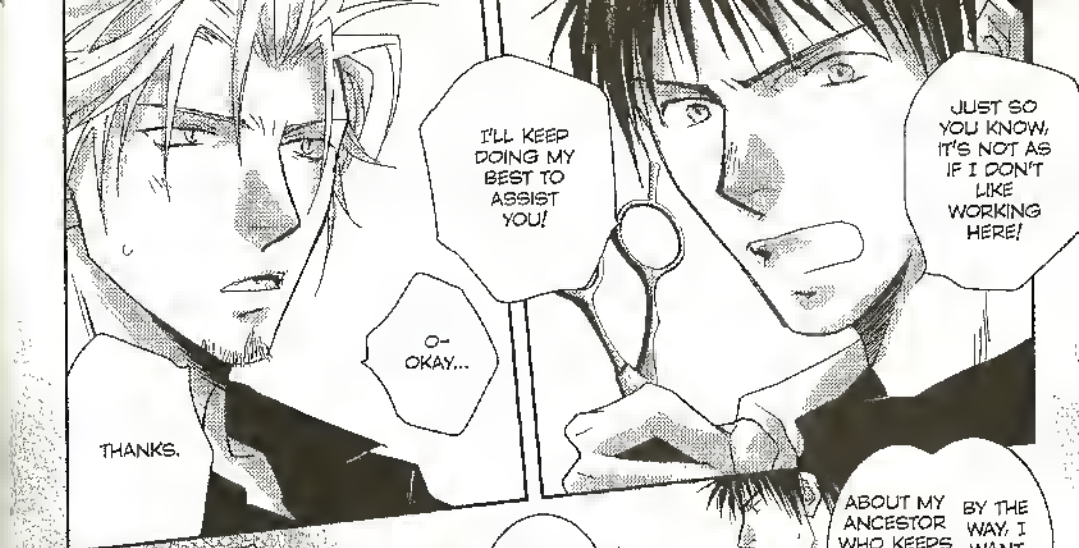
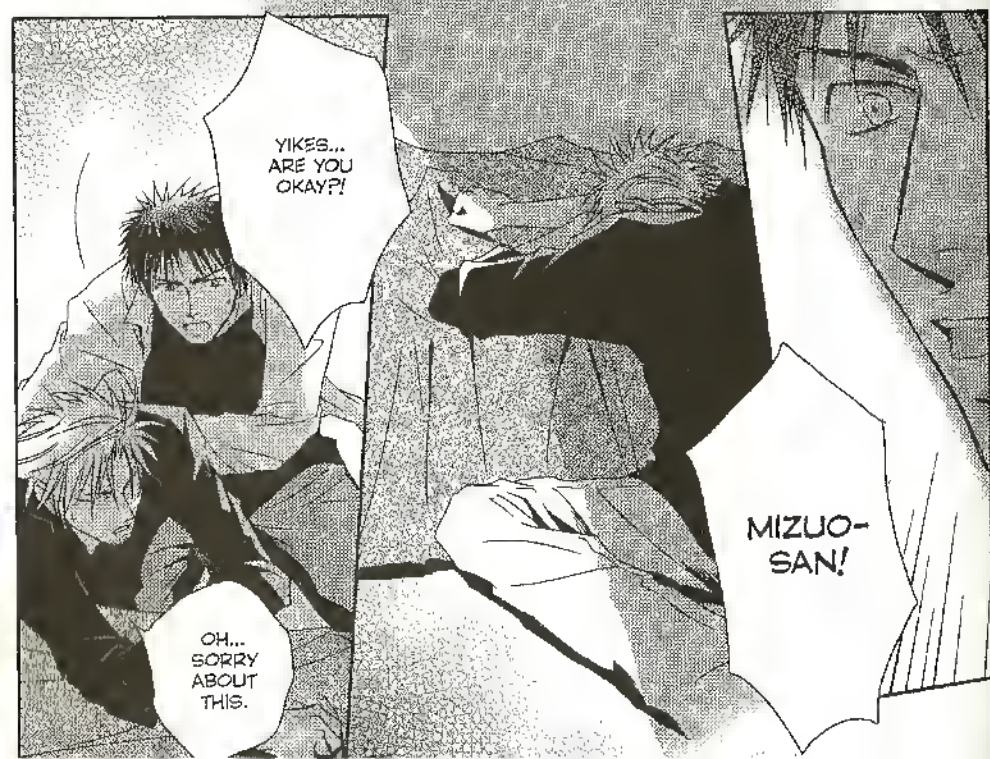
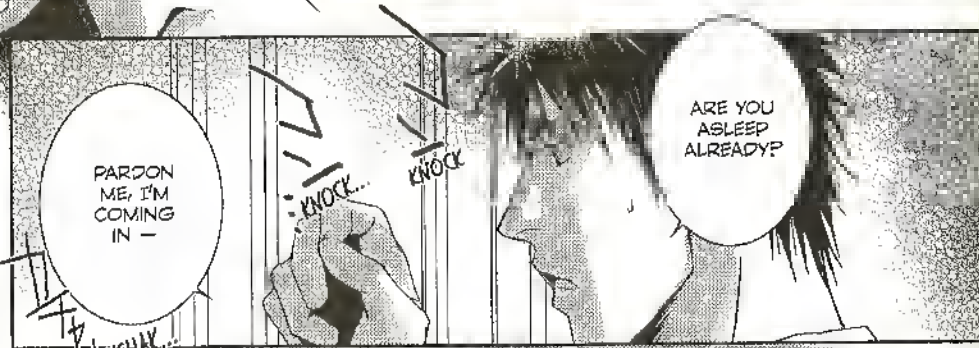
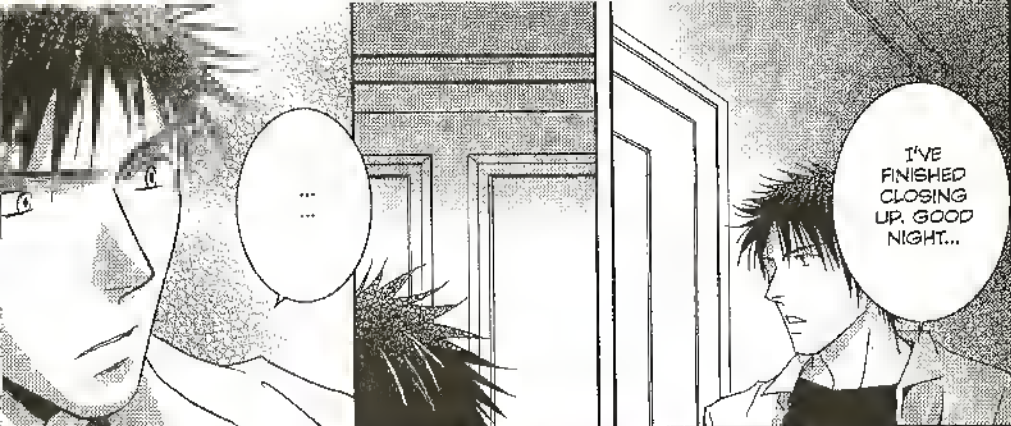
MIZUO-SAN
SPOKE
HAUGHTILY,
BUT I COULD
TELL HE WAS
EXTREMELY
TENSE.

THAT MAN
IS MUCH
OLDER
THAN HE
LOOKS,
BUT...

THAT MAN
MUST BE
EXTREMELY
POWERFUL
- NO
JOKE.

AND MIND
YOU
DON'T
GET YOUR
HAND
BITTEN BY
THAT PET
DOG OF
YOURS.

STAY
WELL.



AAAGH~!

WH-
WHAT...

PFWAH

P
WHY ARE
YOU ACTING
AS IF THIS IS
WORSE THAN
IF I'D TAKEN
YOUR
BLOOD?

UH...
UM...

GOOD
NIGHT.

ANYWAY,
THANKS --
YOU
SAVED
ME.

RUMBLE

IS THAT
IT? GIVE
ME A
BREAK...

UMM...

SO...
THE
TIME'S
FINALLY
COME...!

HUHP

I'M
HUNGRY...

NO,
IT'S ALL
RIGHT...

I PROMISED
I'D NEVER
FEED OFF AN
EMPLOYEE
OF MINE.

PLEASE
LEAVE ME
ENOUGH
TO LIVE,
THOUGH...

Y-YOU
CAN
HAVE A
BIT OF
MY
BLOOD,
IF YOU
LIKE.

WHAT AM I
SUPPOSED
TO DO,
THEN?!

THIS IS NO TIME
TO STICK TO
YOUR WORD!
IT HAS TO BE
BLOOD FROM A
LIVE SOURCE IN
ORDER TO
NOURISH YOU,
RIGHT?!

URGH...
I GUESS
I HAVE
NO OTHER
CHOICE.

I DON'T
REALLY
WANT TO
DO THIS,
BUT...

HUH...?
WHA?
WHAAAT
?!
AND TRY TO
STAY STILL --
OTHERWISE,
I MIGHT
BITE IT OFF.

IN AN
EMERGENCY,
IT WILL
HAVE TO
DO. SPREAD
YOUR LEGS.

A
BRIDGE
SOME-
WHERE,
AFTER
SUN-
SET...

ONE OF
ALMOST
TERRI-
FYING
BEAUTY
...

WHERE
WAS
IT?

UH...

MAY I
ASK YOU
SOMETHING
— FOR LATER
REFERENCE?

W-WHAT
IS IT...?

YOU
IDIOT!

UNNH...!

SO THE
STUFF
FROM
DOWN
THERE...

WORKS
FOR YOU,
TOO...?

I'M
POSITIVE —

WHAT —
YOU
GONNA
GIVE ME
SOME
MORE?

YOU'RE A CAD...
FORGETTING ME
LIKE THIS...

I'VE SEEN
THESE EYES
SOMEWHERE
ELSE
BEFORE.

...WHEN
I'VE NEVER
FORGOTTEN
YOU FOR AN
INSTANT...

...TSUNA.

I WOULD
THINK
YOU'D
HAVE
LEARNED
YOUR
LESSON
BY NOW...

WHAT A
BEAUTIFUL
SIGHT YOU
MUST
HAVE BEEN
AS YOU
HUNTED
HUMANS
IN THE
CITY OF
KYO...

BUT NOW
YOU'VE
GONE AND
FALLEN FOR
THE SAME
MAN ALL
OVER
AGAIN.

AH, SO
LONG
AGO...

AS FOR
PAYBACK —

...YOU CAN
MAKE IT UP
TO ME IN
DUE TIME.

BRR,
COLD...

MIZUO-
SAN...

YOUR
ARM...

DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT IT —
IT'S ANCIENT
HISTORY.

BESIDES,
I MANAGED
TO RETRIEVE
IT AND
STICK IT
BACK ON.

IS THAT
MAN WHO
I THINK IT
IS...P

IT WAS
CHOPPED
OFF BY A
CERTAIN MAN
LONG AGO.
IT HURT.

OH,
THIS —



AH, BUT WHAT A BEAUTIFUL VISAGE YOU HAVE ASSUMED! I NEVER IMAGINED YOU'D INFILTRATED THIS PLACE BY MINGLING WITH THE PAGES.

BECAUSE YOU ARE CURSED, AN UNHOLY ABOMINATION UNTO GOD.

THE SATEREN TELL ME TO USE THIS SWORD ON YOU...

IT HAS BEEN SAID TO DRINK BLOOD...

IS THIS WHAT YOU ARE AFTER, KUREHA? THE TREASURED SWORD OF GENJI, "YASUTSUNA"?

I HEAR IT ALSO ONCE FELLED A DEMON. I THOUGHT IT WAS ONLY THE STUFF OF FAIRYTALES, BUT...

"Sateren" is an adaptation of the Portuguese word "padre," referring to Christian priests.

IN THE WEST, I UNDERSTAND THERE IS A TYPE OF UNDEAD DEMON WHO WALKS AT NIGHT AND FEEDS UPON THE BLOOD OF THE LIVING.

THE VICTIM THEN BECOMES ONE OF THOSE DEMONS.

IS THIS TRUE, KUREHA?

...

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT DESPITE THOSE WOUNDS, YOU STILL LIVE.

...WHAT ARE YOU?

MY BELOVED KUREHA, IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO KILL YOU.

IF YOU ARE TRULY IMMORTAL, PLEDGE YOUR ETERNAL FEALTY TO ME.

DEMON ARMOR

鬼 甲



A MYSTERIOUS STYLIST, WHO OPERATES AN ALL-NIGHT BEAUTY SALON -

WITH HIS BELOVED KAMIKIRI-MARU IN HAND, HIS SKILL IS TOP-NOTCH.

B-B-BOSS!

BUT HIS CUSTOMERS SOMETIMES PAY TOO MUCH...

NOW, THEN...

YOU'RE ALL SET.

HELLO? WHEW~

...GOTCHA.

...OR NOT.

◆END◆



YIKES —
THE CUT'S
OPENED
UP AGAIN.

OUCH...
I SLICED
MYSELF
EARLIER
WITH THE
BOX
CUTTER...

...P
WHAT'S
WRONG?

OW...!

AND HOW
COME IT'S
ALL
CHAINED
UP?

DUNNO...
TO PREVENT
THEFT, MAYBE?
I GUESS WE'LL
HAVE TO WRAP
UP THE WHOLE
THING AS-IS,
ALONG WITH
THE PEDESTAL.

CREAK...



DON'T GET
AHEAD OF
YOURSELF,
WATANABE —
WE'RE NOT
CLOSING UP
JUST YET.

WHEW —
WE'LL
FINALLY BE
ON OUR
LONG
BREAK
STARTING
TOMOR-
ROW!

HAI ALBERTSUDO JACKALOPH
Director
水尾紅井
KUMIKI MIZUO

THIS IS THE
MYSTERIOUS,
ALL-NIGHT BEAUTY
SALON OF TERROR,
"JACKALOPE!"
RUN BY THE
OWNER,
MIZUO-SAN.
I'M WATANABE,
THE FRONT-DESK
CLERK AND
ALL-AROUND
ERRAND BOY.

I'VE
FINISHED
MAKING
ALL THE
CONTACTS,
MIZUO-
SAN.

IT'S
STRANGE,
BUT THE
BOSS HAS
SUCH A
CUTE FIRST
NAME (IT'S
THE ONLY
THING YOU
CAN
DESCRIBE
AS "CUTE"
ABOUT HIM).



DEMON ARMOR
鬼きこう甲

A REAL
SUIT OF
ARMOR,
EHP
WOW!

HUH...SO
SOMEONE
ACTUALLY
BOUGHT
THIS THING?
WHERE WOULD
YOU EVEN PUT
SOMETHING
LIKE THIS?

APPARENTLY,
THERE WAS A
PROBLEM DECIDING
WHO INHERITS IT,
SO THEY PUT IT UP
FOR AUCTION.
I WONDER HOW
MUCH IT
FETCHED.



YOU'LL NEVER CUT THROUGH MY HAIR WITH THOSE REGULAR SCISSORS.

HUHP
IT WON'T CUT...
---WHY?
AM I NOT
HOLDING IT
RIGHT?

ME? ARE
YOU SURE?
OKAY, FINE,
I'LL CUT IT...
BUT JUST A
LITTLE SNIP!

GO
AHEAD,
TRY IT.

THE
SHEARS
MIZUO IS
HOLDING...



...ARE THE
KAMIKIRI-MARU,
THE ONLY SHEARS
IN THIS WORLD
THAT CAN CUT A
VAMPIRE'S HAIR.
I DON'T
KNOW ABOUT
THAT NAME,
BUT...

I...
I SEE...



HUHP! YOU
MEAN WE'RE
NOT GOING
TO SOME
HOT
SPRING?!

THE LONG
BREAK WE'RE
TAKING
STARTING THIS
WEEKEND IS
SO WE CAN
GO GET THE
SHEARS
SHARPENED.

I TOLD YOU
BEFORE,
DIDN'T I?
THESE ARE
SPECIAL-
MADE, BY
A CERTAIN
ARTISAN.

CUTTING
THIS GUY'S
HAIR WILL
BLUNT THEM
TO USE-
LESSNESS,
SO...

HAHAHA!
WHAT
WERE YOU
THINKING,
WATANABE-
KUN?



AAHHH!

WHY "OF
TERROR!"
YOU
ASK?

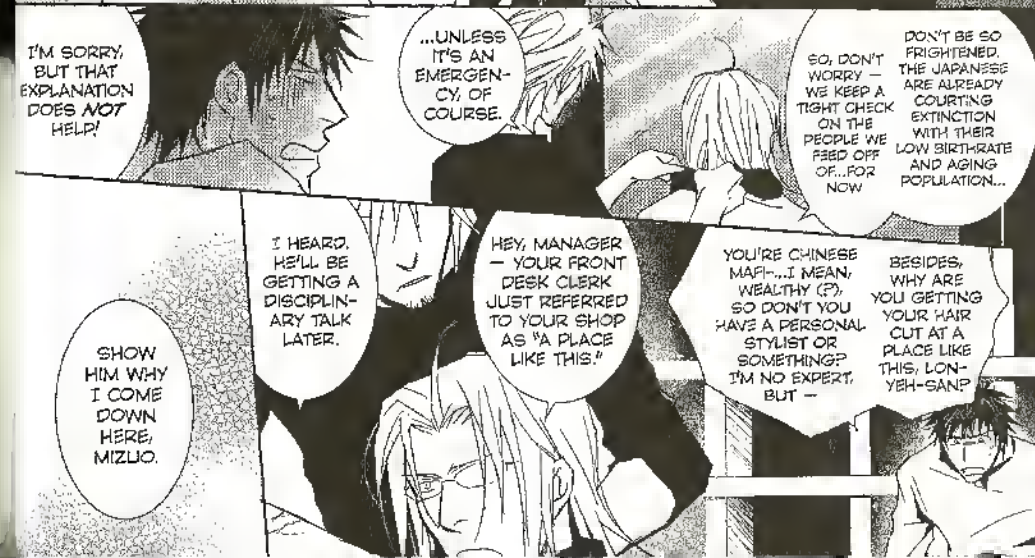
UM, I
HAVE AN
APPOINT-
MENT ~



IT'S
"LON-YEH"...
I SUPPOSE
YOU CAN CALL
ME "LON" IF
YOU WANT.
BUT AT
LEAST SAY,
"WELCOME,"
WATANABE-
KUN.

H-HOW
LONG HAVE
YOU BEEN
THERE,
L-LON...
LON...

IT'S BECAUSE
BOTH THE
BOSS AND
(OCCASIONALLY)
CUSTOMERS
ARE VAMPIRES...!



I'M SORRY,
BUT THAT
EXPLANATION
DOES NOT
HELP!

...UNLESS
IT'S AN
EMERGEN-
CY, OF
COURSE.

SO, DON'T
WORRY -
WE KEEP A
TIGHT CHECK
ON THE
PEOPLE WE
FEED OFF
OF...FOR
NOW

DON'T BE SO
FRIGHTENED.
THE JAPANESE
ARE ALREADY
COURTING
EXTINCTION
WITH THEIR
LOW BIRTHRATE
AND AGING
POPULATION...

I HEARD.
HE'LL BE
GETTING A
DISCIPLIN-
ARY TALK
LATER.

HEY, MANAGER
- YOUR FRONT
DESK CLERK
JUST REFERRED
TO YOUR SHOP
AS "A PLACE
LIKE THIS."

YOU'RE CHINESE
MAP...I MEAN,
WEALTHY (?),
SO DON'T YOU
HAVE A PERSONAL
STYLIST OR
SOMETHING?
I'M NO EXPERT,
BUT -

BESIDES,
WHY ARE
YOU GETTING
YOUR HAIR
CUT AT A
PLACE LIKE
THIS, LON-
YEH-SAN?

SHOW
HIM WHY
I COME
DOWN
HERE,
MIZUO.



BUT I FIND IT ADMIRABLE — AND ENDEARING — THE WAY YOU'VE STAKED YOUR LIFE ON SUCH AN UNGLAMOROUS PROFESSION.

ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU'VE AGED QUITE A BIT, MYOJIN.

N-NEVER MIND ALL THAT! LOOK — HERE IT IS!

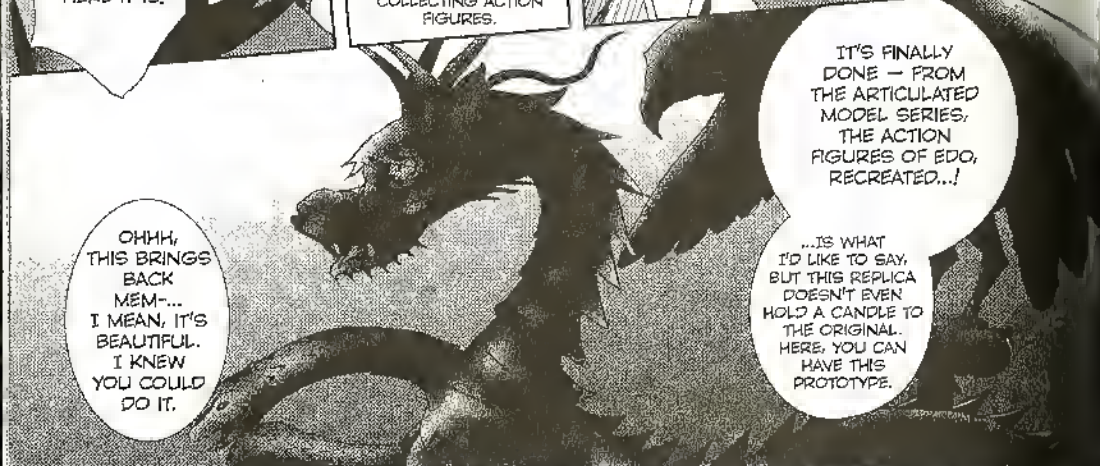
I SEE YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL AS ALWAYS... YOU COULD SURELY BE MISTAKEN FOR A MOVIE STAR OR SOMETHING, IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE FACT THAT YOU'RE INTO SUCH AN OTAKU HOBBY LIKE COLLECTING ACTION FIGURES.

IF IT'S "BALLOONED," IT'S THANKS TO A CERTAIN FAN IN FRONT OF ME WHO PUT UP A LOT OF MONEY TO BACK IT!

THERE WAS A LINE OUT THE DOOR FOR YOUR BISHO JO FIGURES

I NEVER THOUGHT THE COMPANY WOULD GROW AND BE ABLE TO HOST A CONVENTION LIKE THIS.

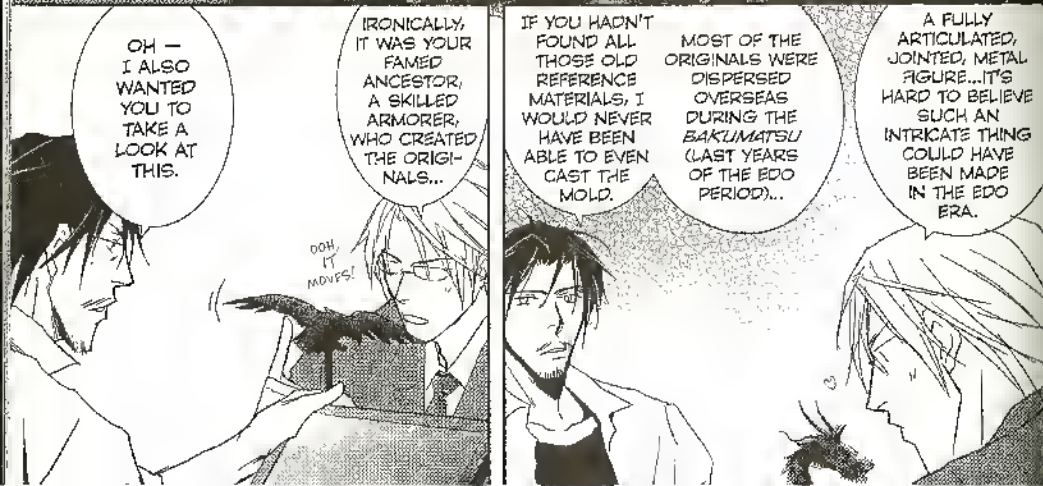
WHAT WAS ONCE ONLY YOUR LITTLE "ACTION FIGURE CLUB" CERTAINLY HAS BALLOONED.



IT'S FINALLY DONE — FROM THE ARTICULATED MODEL SERIES, THE ACTION FIGURES OF EDO, RECREATED...!

...IS WHAT I'D LIKE TO SAY, BUT THIS REPLICA DOESN'T EVEN HOLD A CANDLE TO THE ORIGINAL. HERE, YOU CAN HAVE THIS PROTOTYPE.

OH, THIS BRINGS BACK MEM'... I MEAN, IT'S BEAUTIFUL. I KNEW YOU COULD DO IT.



OH — I ALSO WANTED YOU TO TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

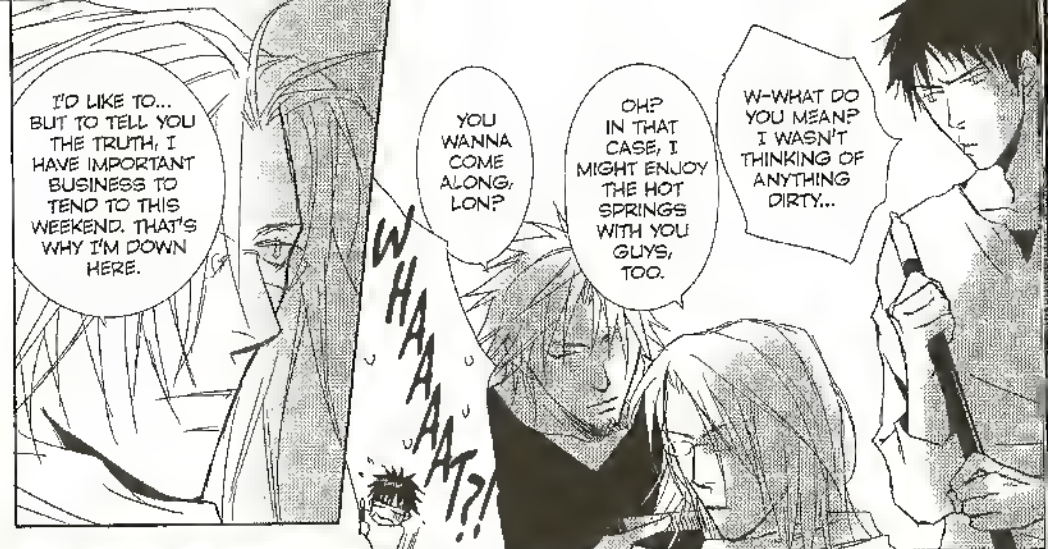
IRONICALLY, IT WAS YOUR FAMED ANCESTOR, A SKILLED ARMORER, WHO CREATED THE ORIGINALS...

DOH, IT MOVES!

IF YOU HADN'T FOUND ALL THOSE OLD REFERENCE MATERIALS, I WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ABLE TO EVEN CAST THE MOLD.

MOST OF THE ORIGINALS WERE DISPERSED OVERSEAS DURING THE BAKUMATSU (LAST YEARS OF THE EDO PERIOD)...

A FULLY ARTICULATED, JOINTED, METAL FIGURE...IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE SUCH AN INTRICATE THING COULD HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE EDO ERA.



I'D LIKE TO... BUT TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I HAVE IMPORTANT BUSINESS TO TEND TO THIS WEEKEND. THAT'S WHY I'M DOWN HERE.

YOU WANNA COME ALONG, LON?

OH? IN THAT CASE, I MIGHT ENJOY THE HOT SPRINGS WITH YOU GUYS, TOO.

W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I WASN'T THINKING OF ANYTHING DIRTY...



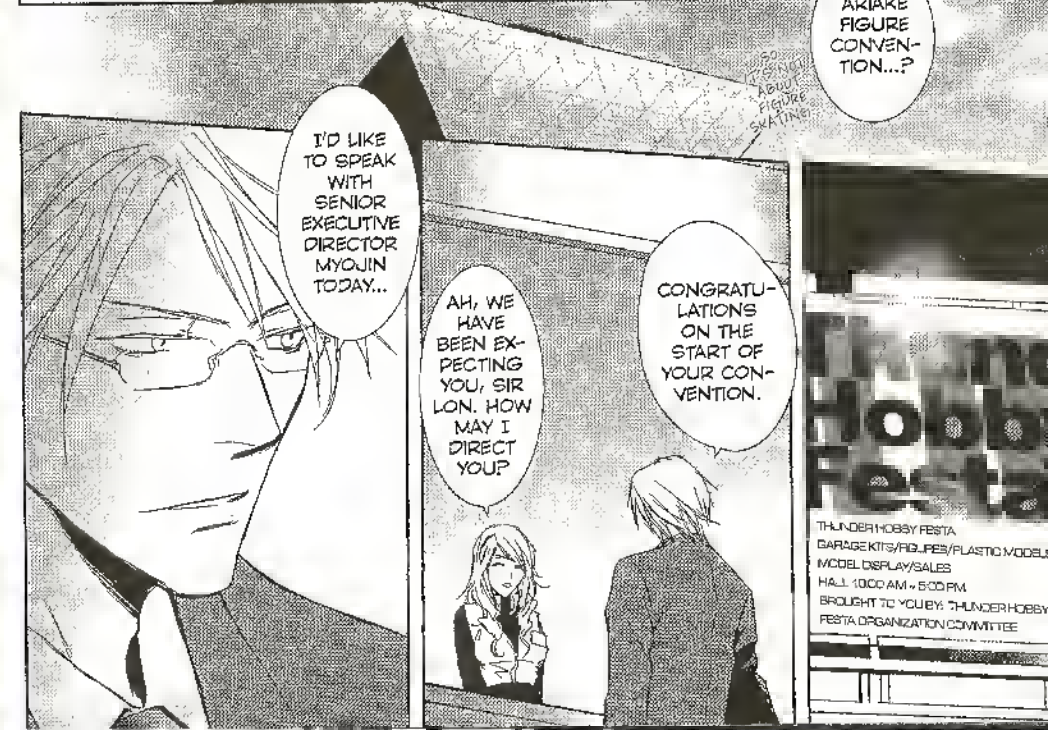
BUSINESS, MY ASS! YOU'RE HERE FOR THAT ARIAKE FIGURE CONVENTION, AREN'T YOU...

A HAIR CUT BEFORE A HOBBY CONVENTION? YOU OTAKU!

YOU SEEM TO HAVE THE WRONG IDEA ABOUT ME. I DO INVESTMENT AND CONSULTING, TOO, YOU KNOW. I'M A LEGITIMATE BUSINESSMAN.

BUSINESS...? IS IT SOME SORT OF BLACK-MARKET DEAL-BROKERING...?

ARIAKE FIGURE CONVENTION...?



I'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH SENIOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MYOJIN TODAY...

AH, WE HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU, SIR LON. HOW MAY I DIRECT YOU?

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE START OF YOUR CONVENTION.

THUNDER HOBBY FESTA

THUNDER HOBBY FESTA
GARAGE KITS/FIGURES/PLASTIC MODELS
MODEL DISPLAY/SALES
HALL 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
BROUGHT TO YOU BY: THUNDER HOBBY
FESTA ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

SORRY,
BUT I'M
AFRAID
YOUR
LITTLE
ROMANTIC
TRIP HAS
COME TO
AN END.

YOU'LL PAY FOR
INTERRUPTING
MY PRECIOUS
'ME' TIME,
KUREHA MIZUO!

IT'S A GOOD
THING HE'S OUT
OF TOKYO AT
THE MOMENT...

WHAT?
NOW?

THAT LITTLE
BITCH...I
TOLD HIM TO
MAKE SURE HE
TOOK CARE OF
THINGS ONCE AND
FOR ALL...

I'M
GOING
TO DO
A BIT OF
RESEARCH.

OH, AND
I'LL SEND
SOMEONE
TO PICK
UP THE
FIGURE
LATER.

I WANTED
TO CHECK
OUT THE
CONVENTION.
☆

IT'S LIKE A
MOUNTAIN
HIDEAWAY
OR SOME-
THING!

THIS
PLACE
SURE IS
OFF THE
BEATEN
PATH!

YOU THINK I'M
THAT WEAKENED?
IT'S TRUE I
HAVEN'T HAD
ANY BLOOD IN
A WHILE BUT...

ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT,
MIZUO-SAN?
MAYBE
YOU'VE
CAUGHT A
CHILL...

THIS IS
THE CLOSEST
LODGING TO
THAT SPECIAL
BLACKSMITH'S
FORGE I
TOLD YOU
ABOUT.

THIS IS
THE ONLY
GAG I
COULD
THINK OF
IN THIS
SITUA-
TION...

UH...WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?
A-ARE YOU
BOWING TO ME?
WHAT THE ---...

BESIDES,
YOU'RE THE
ONE WHO SAID
YOU WANTED
TO COME TO
THE HOT
SPRINGS,
DEAR.

THE
STYLE OF
THE ARMOR
SEEMS A
LITTLE TOO
ENCLOSED
FOR
JAPANESE
ARMOR,
BUT...

HAVE
YOU SEEN
ANYTHING LIKE
THIS BEFORE?
IT SEEMS TO
BE MADE
COMPLETELY
OF METAL,
RIGHT DOWN
TO THE
SMALLEST
DETAIL.

THIS
IS ---

THIS PICTURE
WAS IN SOME
RECORDS I
FOUND WHILE
DIGGING
THROUGH MY
FAMILY'S OLD
STORAGE FOR
REFERENCE
MATERIALS.

DEMON
AR-
MOR...

WHAT IS IT?
I SAID NO CALLS
TODAY -

OOPS,
SORRY
ABOUT
THIS...

PRRRR!

IT'S
GOT SOME
KIND OF
STRANGE
MECHA-
NISM ON
IT, TOO...

I'M
THINKING
MAYBE IT'S
A HUMAN-
SHAPED,
FULLY
ARTICULATED
MODEL...

HUHP!

SYN-
CHRONICITY,
AND ALL
THAT.

YOU AND
I TRULY
DO SHARE
A SPECIAL
BOND,
MY
FRIEND.
THIS IS
FATE.

JUST A CALL
FROM ONE OF MY
SUBORDINATES.
BUT NEVER MIND
THAT, MYOJIN -
I RECOGNIZE
THIS ARMOR.

WHAT...?

I'LL TAKE CARE
OF IT. YES...DON'T
INTERFERE.

SEND ME
THAT FILE
AS AN
ATTACH-
MENT.
WOULD
YOU?

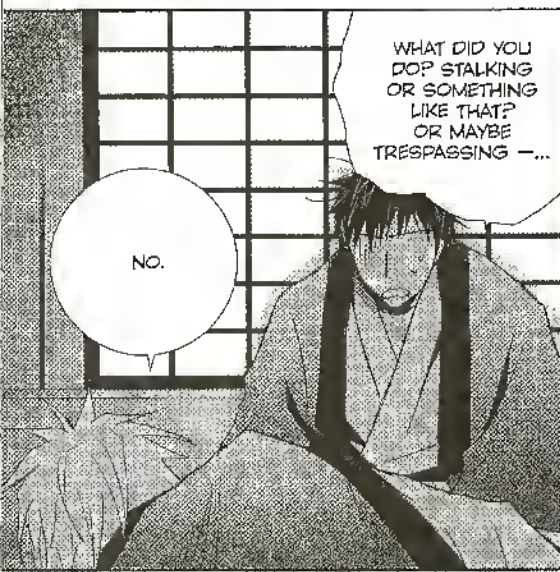
WHAT??
ARE YOU
SERIOUS?

...?
WHAT'S
THE
MATTER
?



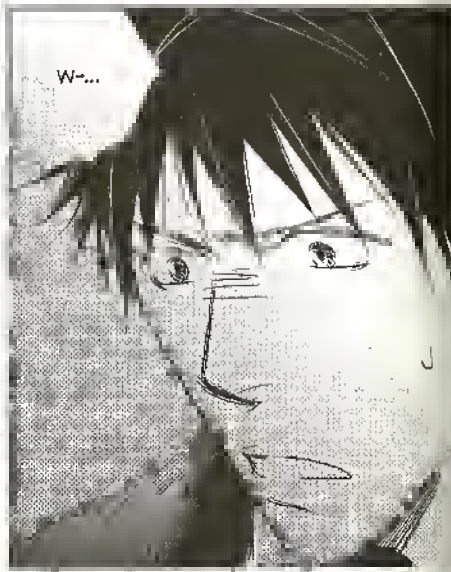
...NEVER TO ENTER THAT VILLAGE AGAIN.

I SWORE...



WHAT DID YOU DO? STALKING OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT? OR MAYBE TRESPASSING —...

NO.



W-...



HE PROBABLY WOULDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE PROMISE... IT WAS MADE SO LONG AGO.

MY SIN IS FAR HEAVIER.



AHHH! IT'S BECAUSE I RARELY WEAR A YUKATA!

PLEASE DON'T LOOK!

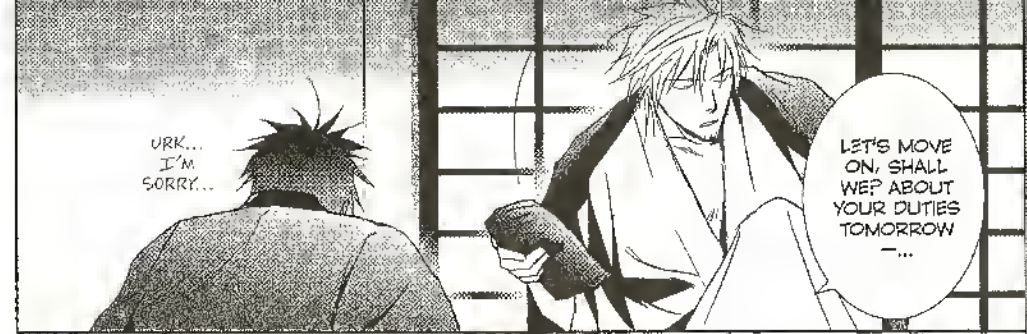
GRAB

YOUR SASH IS TIED FUNNY.

WATA-NABE...

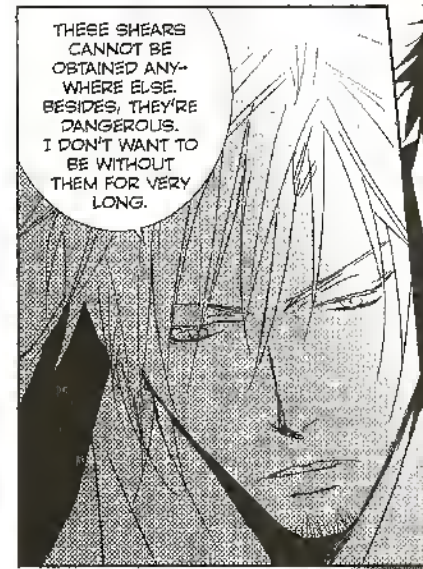
GEEZ, I'VE NEVER DRIVEN A MOUNTAIN ROAD BEFORE...

OH. THEN WHY NOT CONSIDER IT NULL AND VOID ALREADY?

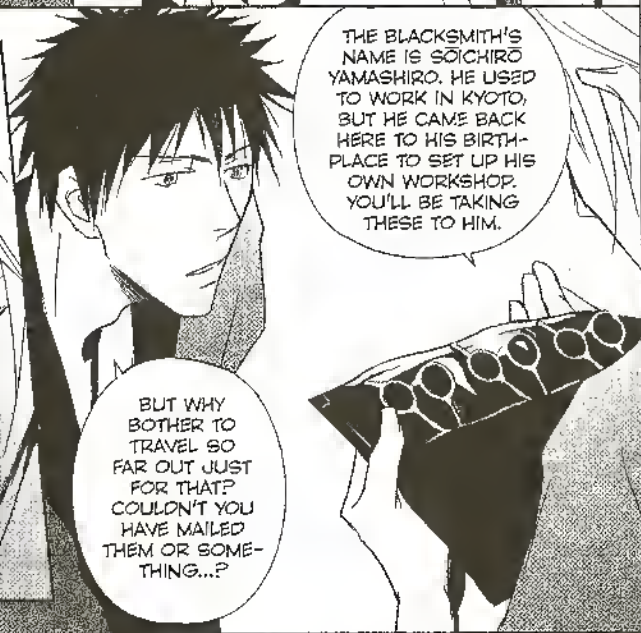


URK... I'M SORRY...

LET'S MOVE ON, SHALL WE? ABOUT YOUR DUTIES TOMORROW —...

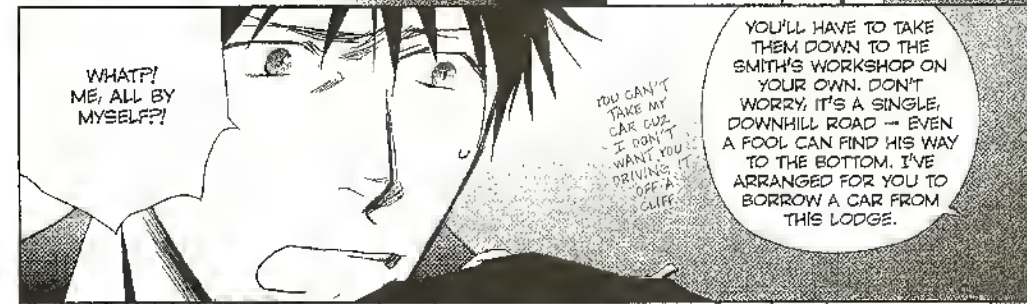


THESE SHEARS CANNOT BE OBTAINED ANYWHERE ELSE BESIDES, THEY'RE DANGEROUS. I DON'T WANT TO BE WITHOUT THEM FOR VERY LONG.



THE BLACKSMITH'S NAME IS SOICHIRO YAMASHIRO. HE USED TO WORK IN KYOTO, BUT HE CAME BACK HERE TO HIS BIRTH-PLACE TO SET UP HIS OWN WORKSHOP. YOU'LL BE TAKING THESE TO HIM.

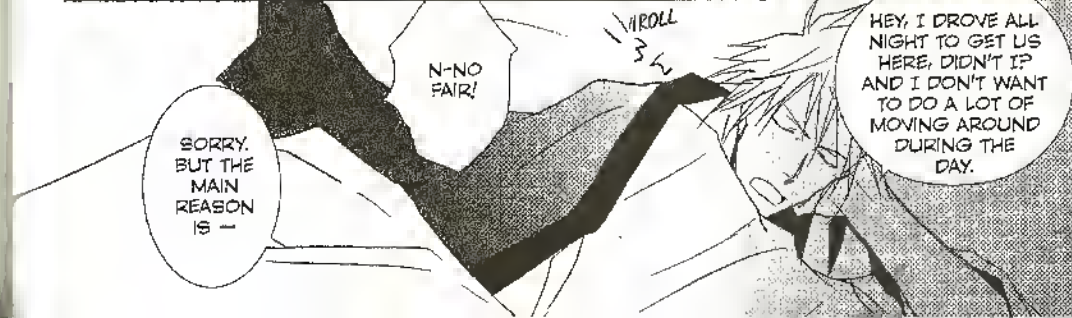
BUT WHY BOTHER TO TRAVEL SO FAR OUT JUST FOR THAT? COULDN'T YOU HAVE MAILED THEM OR SOMETHING...?



WHAT?! ME, ALL BY MYSELF?!

YOU CAN'T TAKE MY CAR CUZ I DON'T WANT YOU DRIVING IT OFF A CLIFF

YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE THEM DOWN TO THE SMITH'S WORKSHOP ON YOUR OWN. DON'T WORRY, IT'S A SINGLE, DOWNHILL ROAD — EVEN A FOOL CAN FIND HIS WAY TO THE BOTTOM. I'VE ARRANGED FOR YOU TO BORROW A CAR FROM THIS LODGE.



SORRY, BUT THE MAIN REASON IS —

N-NO FAIR!

WROLL

HEY, I DROVE ALL NIGHT TO GET US HERE, DIDN'T I? AND I DON'T WANT TO DO A LOT OF MOVING AROUND DURING THE DAY.



HEY,
MIZUO-
SAN...
UM -



...HAVE YOU
STAYED
HERE
BEFORE?



YES...
LONG
AGO.



I MEAN,
IF YOU
DON'T WANT
TO TALK
ABOUT IT,
IT'S FINE
BUT...



IT'S NOT
ABOUT
THAT...

WHAT?
DOES IT
BOther
YOU?



W H A A A A T
- ?!

OKAY,
I'LL TELL
YOU JUST
ONE LITTLE
SECRET -

I'M STILL
QUITE
A BIT
YOUNGER
THAN
LON-YEH.

YOU
SHOULDN'T
ASK ME
MY AGE -
IT'LL MAKE
YOU GO
LIMP.



OH, UM...
I -...
AAAGGH!



WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN,
"WHAAAAAT"
?



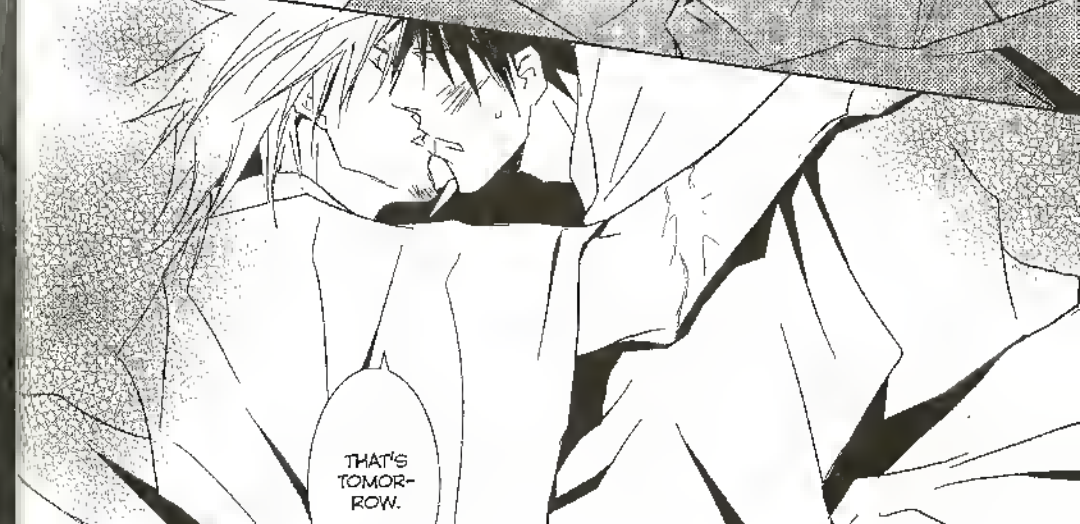
WHA-
...!

YIKES -



I...
I
THOUGHT
IT WAS
PART OF
MY JOB?

WHAT DID
YOU TAG
ALONG
FOR?



THAT'S
TOMOR-
ROW.



I'M
POWER-
LESS
AGAINST
YOU.

I WAS THE
ONE WHO
ALMOST
LOST
CONSCIOUS-
NESS.



W-WHAT
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT...?
THAT'S STRANGE,
COMING FROM
SOMEONE WHO'S
SITTING ON TOP
OF ME --



DON'T
TELL
ANYONE.

REMEM-
BER,
THIS
IS A
SECRET.



...NNH...
TO BE
HONEST --



...YOU'RE
THE ONE
WHO'S THE
MYSTERY.



THAT ONE
TIME I BIT
YOU --

HERE'S
ANOTHER
SECRET:

...HUH
...?



CLANK!



HE'S OUT
LIKE A
LIGHT...
GUESS I
TOOK TOO
MUCH
FROM HIM.

222...

ごっ
てい

WHOOOSH -



...ALWAYS
BRING BACK
UNWANTED
MEMORIES.

WHEW...
I'M
FULL.

WINDY
NIGHTS...



IS THIS...
ANXIETY
I'M
FEELING?

ME...

THE WIND
BRINGS
SOMETHING
WITH IT...

HE'S THE
TYPE TO GET
ALL EXCITED
OVER A
"STAYING
TOGETHER
AT A HOT
SPRING"
SITUATION.

LAST NIGHT -
HIS NEED SEEMED
KIND OF URGENT.
WHAT WAS THAT JOKE
ABOUT HIM BEING
"POWERLESS AGAINST ME?"
(EVEN AS HE SAT
ARROGANTLY ON TOP
OF ME LIKE THAT)...P
WHAT'S GOING ON
WITH HIM?

...BUT IT'S
NEVER A
GOOD SIGN
WHEN THAT
MAN IS
EAGER TO
"DO IT!"

RUDE!

I GUESS
HE WAS
TIRED FROM
DRIVING ALL
THE WAY
OUT HERE...

AAHHH!

ARE YOU
FROM THE
INN UP
THERE?

I'M SOTA
YAMASHIRO.

THE
BLACKSMITH'S
WORKSHOP
IS MY HOME.

YOU'RE
HEADED
FOR THE
BLACKSMITH,
RIGHT? I'VE
COME TO
GUIDE YOU.

H-HUHP
THEN -...

MIZUO-SAN
WAS ACTING
A LITTLE
STRANGE...

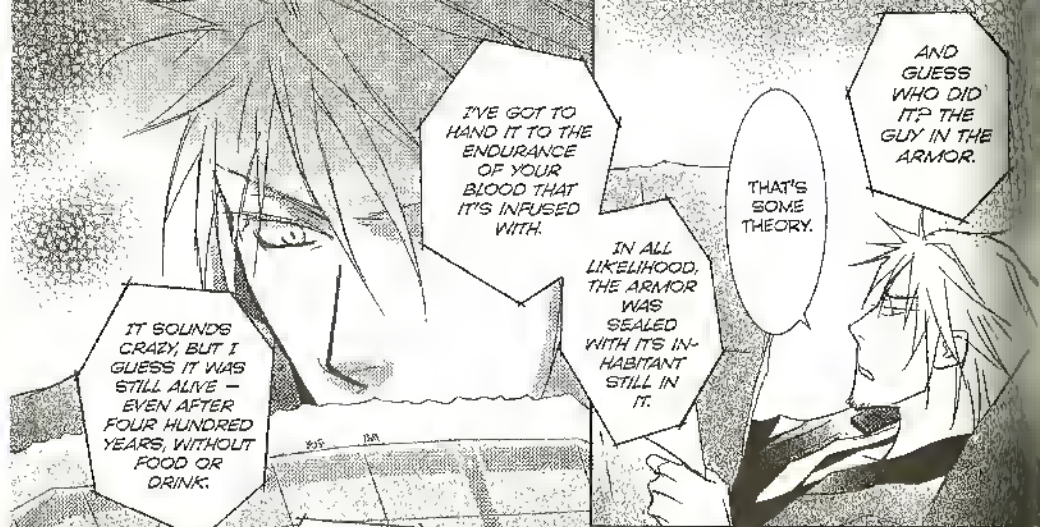
LET'S SEE...
THEN
FROM THE
VILLAGE,
I GO -

H-HUHP
DON'T
SCARE ME
LIKE THAT...

WATANABE,
JUST BRING
BACK HOW-
EVER MANY
HE'S ABLE
TO SHARPEN
FOR TODAY.
AND YOU
MUST
RETURN
BEFORE
THE SUN
SETS.
GOT IT?

OH, WELL...
IF ANYTHING
HAPPENS, THIS
SHOULD (PROBABLY)
PROTECT YOU.
HAVE YAMASHIRO-
SAN TAKE A LOOK
AT ITS CONDITION
AS WELL.

WHAT DID HE
MEAN, "IF
ANYTHING
HAPPENS"...P
AND FROM THE LOOKS
OF THAT THING,
I'M GUESSING
IT'S SOME KIND
OF DAGGER OR
KNIFE - ISN'T
IT AGAINST
THE LAW?



I'VE GOT TO
HAND IT TO THE
ENDURANCE OF YOUR
BLOOD THAT
IT'S INFUSED
WITH.

AND
GUESS
WHO DID
IT? THE
GUY IN THE
ARMOR.

THAT'S
SOME
THEORY.

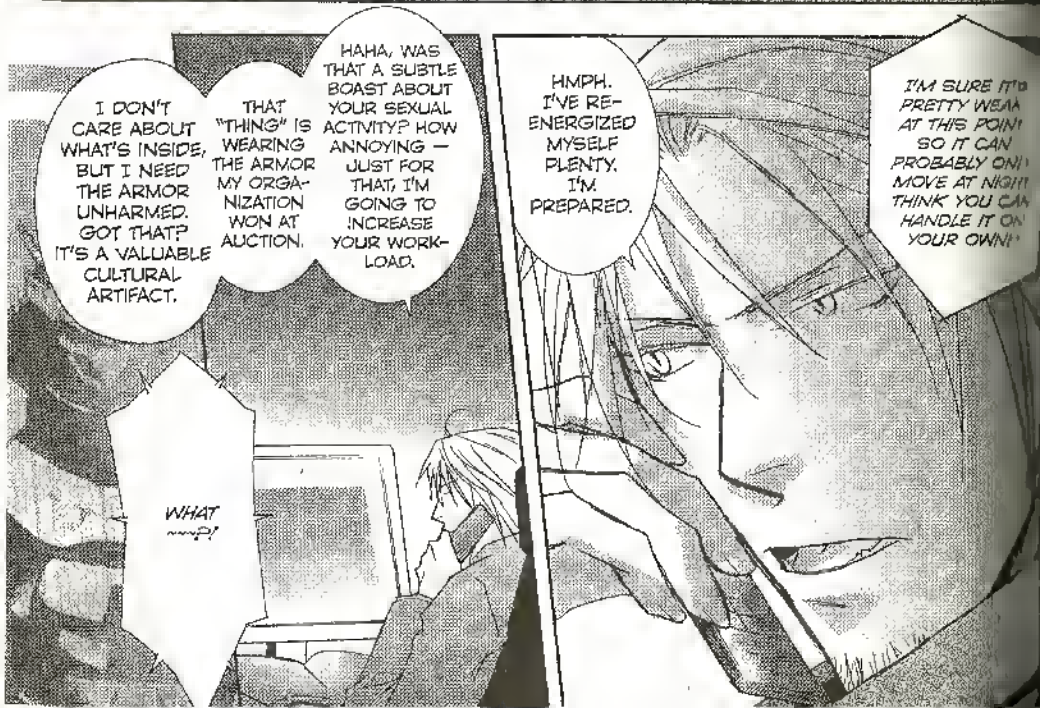
IN ALL
LIKELIHOOD,
THE ARMOR
WAS
SEALED
WITH ITS IN-
HABITANT
STILL IN
IT.

IT SOUNDS
CRAZY, BUT I
GUESS IT WAS
STILL ALIVE -
EVEN AFTER
FOUR HUNDRED
YEARS, WITHOUT
FOOD OR
DRINK.

IT MUST
HAVE BEEN
ONE THAT WAS
CONSIDERED
DEFECTIVE AND
STORED AWAY
SOMEWHERE.
I DON'T KNOW
WHICH ONE OF
HIS VASSALS IT
IS, THOUGH.

I'M SURE
YOU'VE
REALIZED IT
ALREADY, BUT
IT MISSES
YOU -
IT'S ON ITS
WAY.

THAT
CAN'T BE...
I THOUGHT
I TOOK CARE OF
ALL OF
THEM -



I DON'T
CARE ABOUT
WHAT'S INSIDE,
BUT I NEED
THE ARMOR
UNHARMED.
GOT THAT?
IT'S A VALUABLE
CULTURAL
ARTIFACT.

THAT
"THING" IS
WEARING
THE ARMOR
MY ORGA-
NIZATION WON AT AUCTION.

HABA, WAS
THAT A SUBTLE
BOAST ABOUT
YOUR SEXUAL
ACTIVITY? HOW
ANNOYING -
JUST FOR
THAT, I'M
GOING TO
INCREASE
YOUR WORK-
LOAD.

HMPH.
I'VE RE-
ENERGIZED
MYSELF
PLENTY.
I'M
PREPARED.

I'M SURE IT'D
BE PRETTY WEAA
AT THIS POINT!
SO IT CAN
PROBABLY ONLY
MOVE AT NIGHT!
THINK YOU CAN
HANDLE IT ON
YOUR OWN!

WHAT
...?



I'VE BEEN TOLD
TO BRING BACK
HOWEVER MANY HE
CAN SHARPEN
TODAY...BUT I GUESS
I CAN LEAVE THEM
FOR NOW.

WHY
DON'TCHA
SIT AND
HAVE SOME
LUNCH
HERE
WHILE YOU
WAIT?

GRAMPA,
THE GUY
FROM
TOKYO IS
HERE!

WHEN
WILL HE
BE
BACK...?

HUMP
DID HE
GO
OUT?

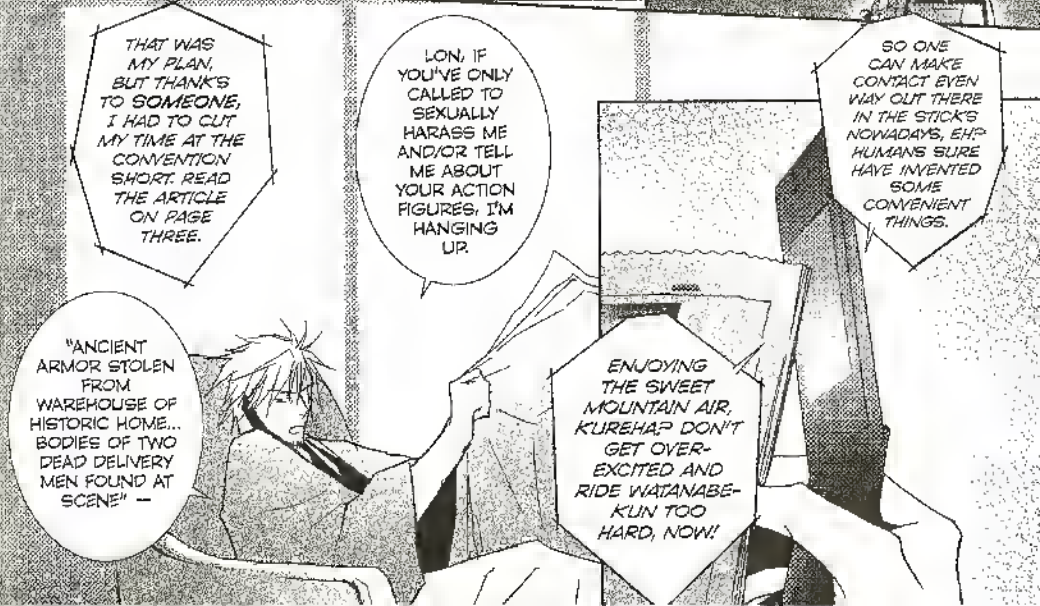
DUNNO.
GRAMPS
KEEPS HIS
OWN
HOURS,
SO...



W-
WHAAAT?!

OH MAN,
THAT'S CITY
FOLK FOR YA -
THERE ARE NO
CONVENIENCE
STORES
AROUND HERE!
NOT IN THIS
NEIGHBOR-
HOOD!!

NO, IT'S
OKAY...
I'LL JUST
GO TO A
CONVENIENCE
STORE
AND -



THAT WAS
MY PLAN,
BUT THANKS
TO SOMEONE,
I HAD TO CUT
MY TIME AT THE
CONVENTION
SHORT. READ
THE ARTICLE
ON PAGE
THREE.

LON, IF
YOU'VE ONLY
CALLED TO
SEXUALLY
HARASS ME
AND/OR TELL
ME ABOUT
YOUR ACTION
FIGURES, I'M
HANGING UP.

SO ONE
CAN MAKE
CONTACT EVEN
WAY OUT THERE
IN THE STICKS
NOWADAYS, EHP
HUMANS SURE
HAVE INVENTED
SOME
CONVENIENT
THINGS.

"ANCIENT
ARMOR STOLEN
FROM
WAREHOUSE OF
HISTORIC HOME...
BODIES OF TWO
DEAD DELIVERY
MEN FOUND AT
SCENE" -

ENJOYING
THE SWEET
MOUNTAIN AIR,
KUREHAP DON'T
GET OVER-
EXCITED AND
RIDE WATANABE-
KUN TOO
HARD, NOW!

I WAS GOING TO TURN HIM DOWN, BUT THEN HE BROUGHT ME THIS.

I MEAN, METAL FOR HAIR-CUTTING SHEARS — THAT'S OUT OF MY REALM OF EXPERTISE.

Y-YES, I CAN SEE HOW YOU WOULD BE.

HAHA...WHEN THE SALON OWNER FIRST CAME AND ASKED ME TO MAKE HIM SOME SCISSORS, I SURE WAS SURPRISED!

HE ASKED ME IF I COULD MAKE SHEARS COMPARABLE TO THE BLADE OF THIS DAGGER.

MIZUO-SAN SEEMS TO HAVE QUITE THE INTEREST IN JAPANESE SWORDS, AND IS SO KNOWLEDGEABLE FOR ONE SO YOUNG.

IT'S QUITE OLD, MADE AROUND THE TIME MY ANCESTORS WERE STILL SMITHING IN THIS AREA, BEFORE MOVING UP TO KYOTO.

THIS DAGGER BEARS THE SIGNATURE OF THE ARTIST — ONE OF MY ANCESTORS.

WHAT THE — P? MIZUO-SAN!!

AND MIZUO-SAN WAS QUITE THE SEXY BEAUTY AS WELL!

AH... THIS IS HOW THE BOSS MANAGES TO GET PEOPLE TO DO HIS BIDDING...

WELL, I COULDN'T REFUSE AFTER HE SHOWED ME THIS, AND HE AMUSED ME... SO I AGREED.

BY THE WAY, MIZUO-SAN IS PROBABLY MUCH, MUCH OLDER THAN YOU ARE, SOICHIRO-SAN...

HAHAHA — HOW COULD I REFUSE?

PHONE CALL?

AH, SPEAK OF THE DEVIL...

GRAMPA — PHONE CALL! IT'S FROM MIZUO-SAN!

WHO ARE YOU CALLING "NABE-YAN"...? MY HAND... IT'S KILLING ME...

IT'S SO MUCH EASIER WITH TWO PLAYERS! YOU SHOULD STAY HERE FOREVER, NABE-YAN!

YAAY, I FINALLY GOT IT — THE UNLOCKABLE HIDDEN WEAPON, "DOUJI-GIRI YASUTSUNA"!

OH! WELCOME BACK, GRAMPA!

WHAT AN INACCURATE GAME.

WHAT? THAT YASUTSUNA'S INCORRECT — THAT'S A WESTERN SWORD NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT.

I'M AFRAID I'VE INCONVENIENCED HIM BY MOVING FROM KYOTO ALL THE WAY OUT TO THE BOONDOCKS.

HOW IS MIZUO-SAN DOING THESE DAYS?

I'M SOICHIRO YAMASHIRO.

I'M SORRY FOR INTRUDING LIKE THIS! I'M HERE ON BEHALF OF MIZUO-SAN, WHO CONTACTED YOU EARLIER...

IT DOESN'T MATTER — IT'S ONLY A GAME! IT JUST HAS TO LOOK GOOD!

AH, YES — SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.

WELL, HERE ARE THE GOODS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

OH, THE BOSS IS JUST FINE... ALMOST TOO ENERGETIC, YOU COULD SAY...



...I
SENSE
HIM.

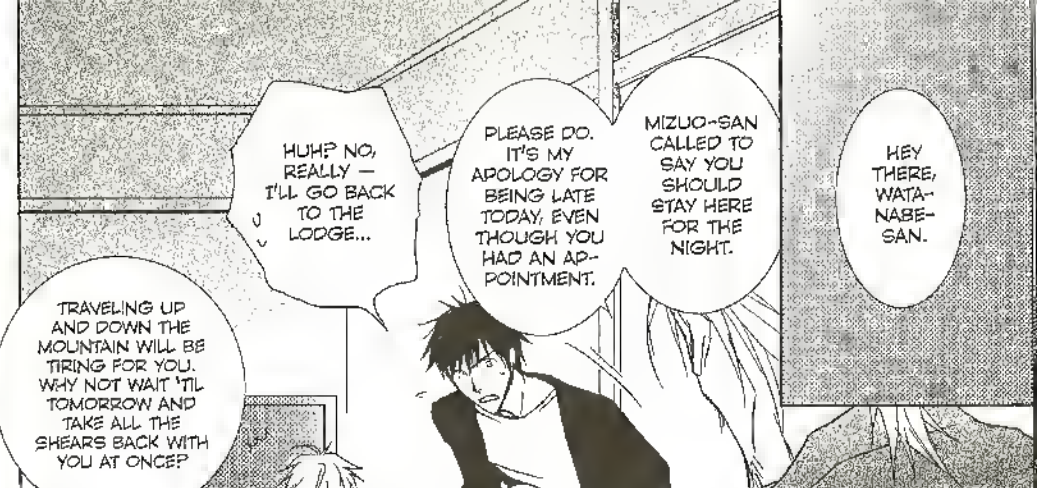


IF HE
GETS TOO
VIOLENT,
I'LL END
UP
BREAKING
THE
ARMOR.

THAT
STUPID
LON-YEH,
MAKING
THINGS
DIFFICULT...

I GUESS
THE ONLY
WAY IS TO
TAKE HIM
OUT WHILE
HE'S STILL
QUIET.

IF HE'S
WEAKENED
HE
SHOULDN'T
BE ABLE
TO MOVE
UNTIL THE
SUN HAS
SET.



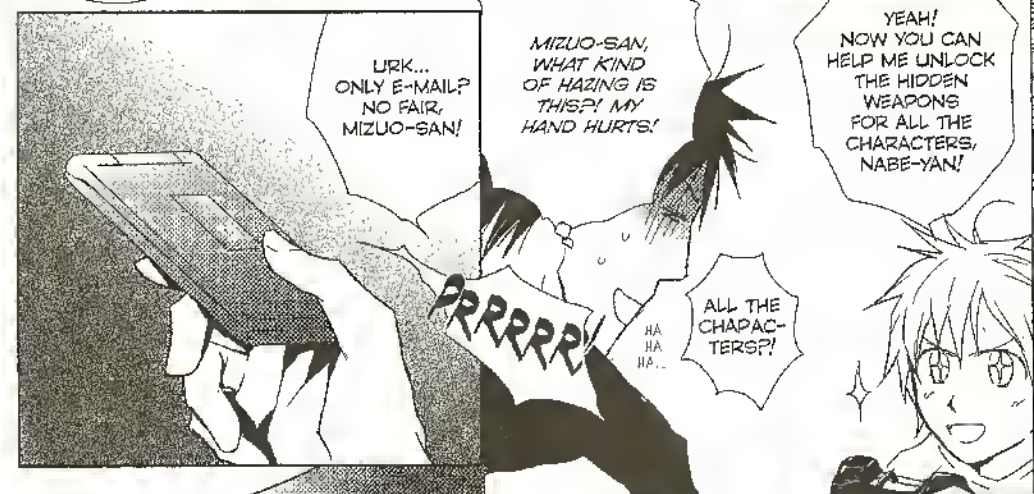
HUH? NO,
REALLY —
I'LL GO BACK
TO THE
LODGE...

PLEASE DO.
IT'S MY
APOLOGY FOR
BEING LATE
TODAY, EVEN
THOUGH YOU
HAD AN AP-
POINTMENT.

MIZUO-SAN
CALLED TO
SAY YOU
SHOULD
STAY HERE
FOR THE
NIGHT.

HEY
THERE,
WATA-
NABE-
SAN.

TRAVELING UP
AND DOWN THE
MOUNTAIN WILL BE
TIRING FOR YOU.
WHY NOT WAIT 'TIL
TOMORROW AND
TAKE ALL THE
SHEARS BACK WITH
YOU AT ONCE?



URK...
ONLY E-MAIL?
NO FAIR,
MIZUO-SAN!

MIZUO-SAN,
WHAT KIND
OF HAZING IS
THIS? MY
HAND HURTS!

YEAH!
NOW YOU CAN
HELP ME UNLOCK
THE HIDDEN
WEAPONS
FOR ALL THE
CHARACTERS,
NABE-YAN!

HA
HA
HA...
ALL THE
CHADAC-
TERS?!



MIZUO-SAN'S
STILL BEING
CHASED
AROUND?


"PROBABLY"
...?

AND IN A
PLACE LIKE
THIS?
THIS ISN'T
GOOD —...

FROM KUREHA MIZUO
AN IMPORTANT
MESSAGE

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE
SEEMS TO BE OUT
LOOKING FOR ME.
HE'S A LITTLE VIOLENT,
SO I WANT YOU TO
STAY THERE UNTIL I
CONTACT YOU AGAIN.
I'VE ARRANGED FOR
YOU TO KEEP THE CAR
UNTIL TOMORROW.

DO NOT STEP OUTSIDE
OR HEAD INTO THE
MOUNTAIN TONIGHT
FOR ANY REASON.
HE HATES THAT
BLADE I GAVE YOU.
SO IF YOU JUST
STAY THERE YOU'LL
PROBABLY BE
OKAY LATER.




BUT...
HE MET
HIS END
EARLIER
THAN I
THOUGHT.

WHAT
A DISAP-
POINTMENT.



THE LORD
WHOM WE
BOTH ONCE
SERVED
LIVES NO
LONGER.

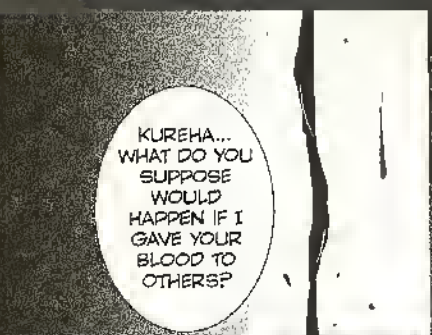


YOU'VE
SLEPT
LONG...
WERE YOU
SURPRISED
WHEN YOU
AWOKE?

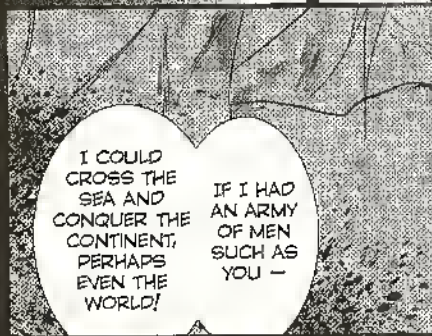


WHAT'S
WRONG?
THE BLOOD
YOU WANT
IS RIGHT
HERE.

THE
NIGHTS ARE
BRIGHTER...
THE AIR, THE
WATER, THE
HUMANS —
ALL MORE
POLLUTED
AND FOUL
NOW.
TERRIBLE,
ISN'T IT?



KUREHA...
WHAT DO YOU
SUPPOSE
WOULD
HAPPEN IF I
GAVE YOUR
BLOOD TO
OTHERS?




I COULD
CROSS THE
SEA AND
CONQUER THE
CONTINENT,
PERHAPS
EVEN THE
WORLD!

IF I HAD
AN ARMY
OF MEN
SUCH AS
YOU —



THE
BATEREN
HATE YOU,
CALLING
YOU A
DEMON,
BUT...

AN ARMY
THAT WALKS
IN DARKNESS,
INVOLABLE TO
A BLADE,
NEEDING NO
WEAPON,
CRAVING ONLY
THE BLOOD OF
THE ENEMY...



I WOULD NAME
THEM KIKOUHEI
(DEMON-ARMOR
SOLDIERS), IN
HONOR OF YOUR
BLOOD WHICH
RUNS THROUGH
THEM. WHAT DO
YOU THINK, EHP?



MY
LORD...

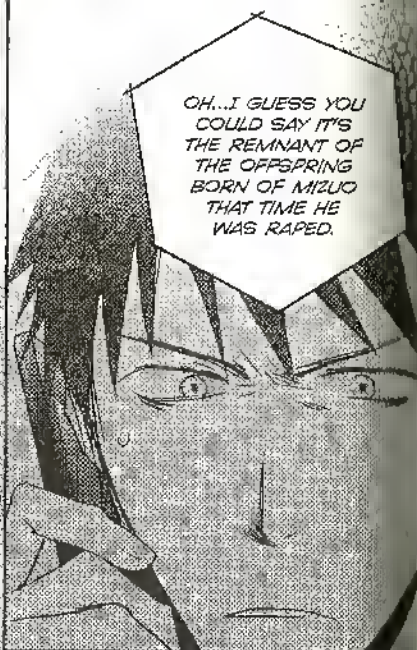
YOU ARE
CLEARLY...
MUCH
MORE OF
A DEMON
THAN I...

I WANTED
TO SEE
JUST HOW
FAR A MERE
MORTAL
COULD RISE
TO POWER.

THE MAN
FEARED
NEITHER GOD
NOR BUDDHA.
HE'D KILLED
EVEN MORE
MEN THAN I
HAD. HE
FASCINATED
ME.



W-WHAT DID YOU SAY?!



OH...I GUESS YOU COULD SAY IT'S THE REMNANT OF THE OFFSPRING BORN OF MIZUO THAT TIME HE WAS RAPED.



I...

STAGGER

I WAS ONLY SPEAKING FIGURATIVELY, OF COURSE. HAHA, DID I SHOCK YOU?

I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO REACT...



HMP THE SENGOKU... NO, THE AZUCHI-MOMOYAMA PERIOD -- KNOW IT? AFTER THAT COMES THE EDO PERIOD...

YES, I KNOW! BUT WHAT I'M ASKING IS --

HOW THE HELL OLD IS MIZUO-SAN...?

A DAIMYO? WHAT ERA ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? SEX-PLAY?

LONG AGO...MIZUO WAS HELD CAPTIVE IN THE CASTLE OF A CERTAIN DAIMYO.

IT WAS ALSO PARTLY A KIND OF A SEX-PLAY THING, BUT...



LONG-YEH-SAN...P

BUT IN THE END THEY TURNED OUT TO BE USELESS AS AN ARMY, BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T BE PROPERLY CONTROLLED. SO THEY WERE ALL DESTROYED.

EVEN SO, IT SEEMS THE LAW OF AVERAGES DICTATED HE GOT A FEW SUCCESSSES...

ANYWAY, THE GIST IS THAT THE DAIMYO USED IT TO CUT MIZUO. TAKING HIS BLOOD TO FEED TO OTHER HUMANS IN ORDER TO MAKE AN INVINCIBLE ARMY...

BUT ADAPTATION IS DIFFICULT -- YOU'LL RARELY CREATE PROPER VAMPIRES THAT WAY.

AT THE TIME, THAT DAIMYO POSSESSED A SWORD THAT COULD CUT VAMPIRES LIKE US -- THINK OF IT AS THE ULTIMATE VERSION OF THOSE SHEARS

I ONCE ALMOST DIED ON THE BLADE OF THAT SWORD

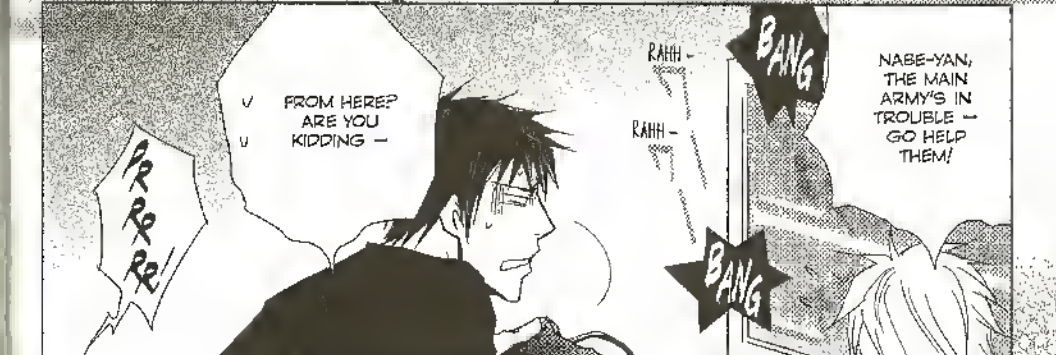
WHAT?!

NO... THERE'S NO WAY MIZUO WOULD HAVE INTENTIONALLY LET IT ESCAPE, HAD HE KNOWN...

OR SO IT WAS THOUGHT...



WWSH!



FROM HERE? ARE YOU KIDDING --

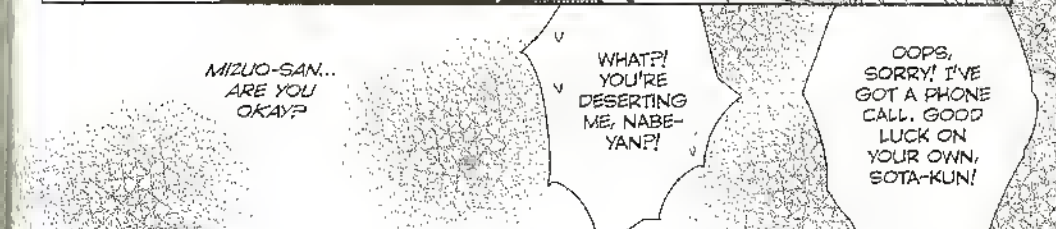
RAHH --

RAHH --

BANG

BANG

NABE-YAN, THE MAIN ARMY'S IN TROUBLE -- GO HELP THEM!



MIZUO-SAN... ARE YOU OKAY?

WHAT?! YOU'RE DESERTING ME, NABE-YAN?!

OOPS, SORRY! I'VE GOT A PHONE CALL. GOOD LUCK ON YOUR OWN, SOTA-KUN!



3-BUT... WHAT IS THIS "THING"...P

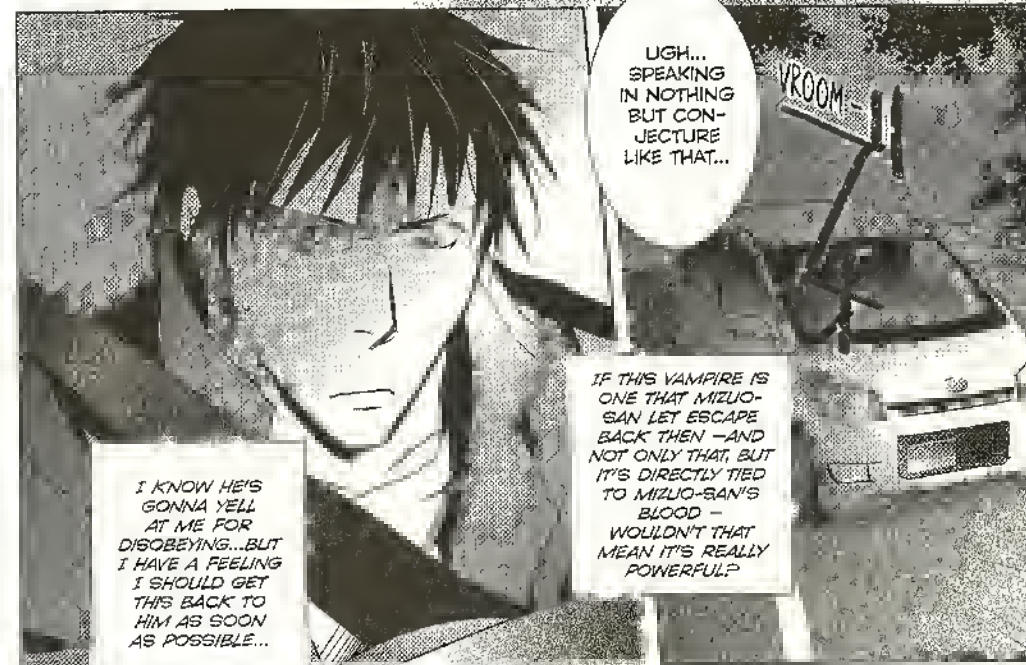
DON'T WORRY, THAT THING'S ONLY GOT EYES FOR MIZUO. YOU GUYS WILL BE SAFE AS LONG AS YOU STAY THERE.

L-LON-YEH-SAN... HELLO.

HELLO, WATANABE-KUN? I GOT YOUR E-MAIL.



SO, WHAT'S INSIDE THIS DEMON ARMOR?



UGH...
SPEAKING
IN NOTHING
BUT CON-
JECTURE
LIKE THAT...

I KNOW HE'S
GONNA YELL
AT ME FOR
DISOBEYING...BUT
I HAVE A FEELING
I SHOULD GET
THIS BACK TO
HIM AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE...

IF THIS VAMPIRE IS
ONE THAT MIZUO-
SAN LET ESCAPE
BACK THEN -AND
NOT ONLY THAT, BUT
IT'S DIRECTLY TIED
TO MIZUO-SAN'S
BLOOD -
WOULDN'T THAT
MEAN IT'S REALLY
POWERFUL?



FORTUNATELY,
MIZUO HAS A
WEAPON MADE
OF THE SAME
MATERIAL AS
THE MISSING
CONTROL ROD,
AS WELL AS
THOSE SHEARS
OF HIS...

IN FACT,
THE WHOLE
REASON IT
STARTED
MOVING
AGAIN IS
PROBABLY
BECAUSE
THE ROD IS
MISSING.

DON'T WORRY.
IF WORSE COMES
TO WORST,
THAT ARMOR HAS
A SHUT-DOWN
MECHANISM - A
CONTROL ROD CAN
BE INSERTED TO
STOP IT FROM
MOVING.



YEAH, WELL...
UNFORTU-
NATELY, BOTH
THE DAGGER
AND THE
SHEARS ARE
WITH ME
RIGHT NOW...



GAH...!

MIZUO-SAN...!

SHUFF

SHUFF

IF YOU WANT TO TAKE OVER MY HUNTING GROUND, YOU'LL HAVE TO DEFEAT ME!

BUT DON'T EXPECT ME TO TREAT YOU AS SUCH.

HUH... I WONDERED WHY IT HURT SO BAD - THIS ARMOR IS MADE OUT OF THAT SAME STEEL.

LOOKS LIKE YOU WERE TREATED SPECIAL.

AMAZING THAT YOU CAN STILL MOVE AROUND, WEARING SOMETHING LIKE THIS... YOU'RE A CHILD OF MINE, ALL RIGHT.



CREAK

KU... REHA...

...MY BELOVED... KUREHA...



WHAM!

GRAARGH

WATANABE...
HURRY AND
RUN, YOU
FOOL....!

IT IS YOU
WHO ARE
THE FOOL,
KUREHA.



CLANK

HERE'S
THE
DAGGER!

NO -

THAT
IDIOT...!
WHY DID
HE
COME?

WATANABE,
GET
DOWN!


!!

FWASH!



I
THOUGHT
YOU...
PERISHED
LONG
AGO.

IT HAS
BEEN A
LONG
TIME,
TSUNA
WATA-
NABE.



...WHILE
YOUR BLOOD
STILL LIVES.

TAKE UP
YOUR
BLADE —
I AM NEXT;
AM I NOT?
LET US
SETTLE
THINGS
ONCE AND
FOR ALL...

CREAK...



I SUFFER...
HURRY —...

IT WAS THE
NEARNESS OF
YOUR BLOOD
THAT CAUSED
ME TO ATTACK
OUT OF A
MOMENTARY
FRENZY
---AS DID
YOU.

...I
DESIRE
IT
NOT.



...SO
YOU'VE
FINALLY
COME
OUT.

...I SEE.

I'M CURIOUS
AS TO WHY
YAMASHIRO-
SAN'S FAMILY
TREASURE HAS
THE SAME NAME
AS MIZUO-SAN...
BUT HE'LL
PROBABLY JUST
GET MAD
AT ME, SO I
WON'T ASK.

...THOSE
WERE
YAMASHIRO-
SAN'S
WORDS.

...HOW
DID YOU
KNOW
WHERE I
WAS?

WHOSE
FAULT DO
YOU
THINK IT
WAS?
IT HURTS,
OF
COURSE!

BY THE WAY,
MIZUO-SAN...
HOW'S YOUR
WOUND?

I -
I'M SO
SORRY!

TCH!
HUMANS
AND THEIR
INTRUSIVE
TECHNOLOGY!

PRETTY GOOD
COVERAGE
IN THE
MOUNTAINS.

I USED THE
NINJA ART
OF "CELL
PHONE
GPS."

WHAT'S
WITH THE
POSE...?

THE
SCENT
OF
BATTLE...

HMM...
I JUST HAD
A TINGLING
SENSE ---
IS WHAT I'D
LIKE TO SAY,
BUT...

TYPICALLY,
SEVERAL
SWORDS ARE
MADE AND
THE BEST
ONE IS THEN
GIVEN.

IT'S SAID
TO BE ONE
OF THE
SWORDS MY
ANCESTOR
CREATED
TO FULFILL
AN ORDER
FROM THE
EMPEROR.

THIS IS
OUR FAMILY
TREASURE -
"KAGEUCHI
KUREHA."

While it is said to be a sword called Kureha, the name uses different kanji than that of Mizuo's first name. Mizuo's first name means "scarlet leaves," while this sword's name means "black wing."

BUT SOTA-
KUN HAS
A BRIGHT
FUTURE
AHEAD IF
HE LOVES
SWORDS
SO MUCH.

MUST EVERY-
THING BE
TRANSLATED TO
A WESTERN
NAME WITH YOU?
YOU AND YOUR
SILLY GAMES...

WHOA! THE
DEADLY
SWORD,
BLACK WING!
SUPER-
COOL!

I'LL
EVENTUALLY
DRAG HIM
BACK DOWN
HERE TO
RETRAIN
HIM.

YES, I'D
BETTER
LOOK INTO
PASSING
THE REINS
ON TO
YOUR DAD
SOON.

BUT MIZUO-SAN
SAID ONLY THIS
PLACE CAN
FORGE HIS
SCISSORS! HE'LL
BE SAD IF NO
ONE CARRIES ON
YOUR FAMILY'S
SKILLS!

HEH.
A STYLIST IS
SO MUCH
COOLER. MAYBE
I SHOULD
BECOME
MIZUO-SAN'S
APPRENTICE.

WHAAAT?
MIZUO-SAN
WILL BE
SAD?
REALLY?

WHAAAT
- ?!

TELL HIM
I HOPE TO
HAVE HIS
CONTINUED
BUSINESS
IN THE
FUTURE.

I'M GRATEFUL
TO MIZUO-SAN.
IT'S THANKS TO
HIM THAT THIS
FORGING
TECHNIQUE WAS
RESURRECTED.

THE HELMET!
WHERE'S THE
HEAD?!

HEY, KUREHA!
WHAT'S WITH
THIS PHOTO?!
THE ARMOR'S
BEEN
BEHEADED!

I HOPE YOU
WEREN'T
TRYING TO GET
THAT THING TO
ATTACK AND
KILL WATANABE
IN THE
CONFUSION.

YOU'RE THE
ONE WHO
TIPPED WATA-
NABE OFF AND
SENT HIM TO
MY LOCATION,
AREN'T YOU?

WHAT DID
YOU DO?
I TOLD YOU
TO BE
CAREFUL!
HURRY AND
RETRIEVE
IT!

OH, THAT...
---IT FLEW
OFF SOME-
WHERE.

WHAAAT?
I DON'T KNOW
ANYTHING ABOUT
THAT! HE WAS
JUST WORRIED
ABOUT YOU, MAN
— HE WENT TO
YOU OUT OF
LOVE! LOVE I
TELL YOU!

BEFORE
THAT,
THERE'S
SOME-
THING I
WANT TO
ASK YOU,
LON...

GAAAH! NO, STOP,
DON'T!! I SWEAR
NEVER TO DO
ANYTHING TO
HIM, EVER!
HOW DARE YOU THINK
OF DESTROYING A
CULTURAL ARTIFACT,
YOU BARBARIAN!

...IF YOU'RE
GOING TO GO
AFTER MY STAFF,
I'LL HAVE THAT
ARMOR MELTED
DOWN AND USED
TO FORGE MORE
SHEARS FOR ME.

HMPH...
THANKS, BUT
KEEP YOUR
CONCERNS TO
YOURSELF. I'D
NEVER LOSE
TO SOME
SHRIVELED-UP
MUMMY.

THAT MUMMY
WAS IN A
WEAKENED STATE,
BUT IF IT HAD
GOTTEN YOUR
BLOOD AND
REVIVED TO FULL
CAPACITY, WHO
KNOWS WHAT
COULD HAVE
HAPPENED!

BUT YOU
WERE
LUCKY
AS WELL.

WATA-
NABE...

CRASH

A-ARE
YOU
OKAY?!

OW...!

THANKS.

HUH?! OH,
COME ON!
LET ME
KNOW
WHAT I
DID!

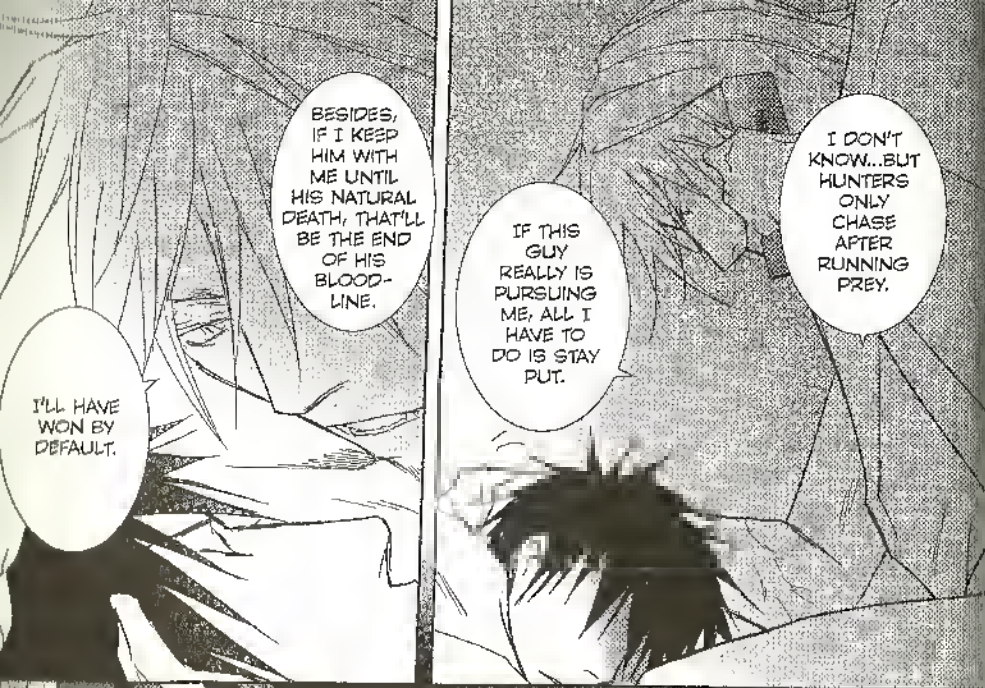
IT'S ALL
RIGHT.
YOU'RE
FINE JUST
THE WAY
YOU ARE.

IF YOU
DON'T RE-
MEMBER,
NEVER
MIND.

HUHP
HUHP
FOR
WHAT?

NO,
YOU WERE
PASSED OUT
THE WHOLE
TIME, WITH
YOUR EYES
ROLLED UP
IN YOUR
HEAD.

D-DID
I DO
SOME-
THING?!



I'LL HAVE WON BY DEFAULT.

BESIDES, IF I KEEP HIM WITH ME UNTIL HIS NATURAL DEATH, THAT'LL BE THE END OF HIS BLOOD-LINE.

IF THIS GUY REALLY IS PURSUING ME, ALL I HAVE TO DO IS STAY PUT.

I DON'T KNOW...BUT HUNTERS ONLY CHASE AFTER RUNNING PREY.



ONE LAST WORD, KUREHA -

ARE YOU DONE? BECAUSE I'M HANGING UP NOW.

I DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GET BACK TO YOUR FORMER POWERFUL GLORY JUST ON WATANABE-KUN'S SEMEN ALONE.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. YOU'RE PRETTY OLD - AND YOU HAVEN'T BEEN FEEDING PROPERLY. EITHER, YOU'D BE ON PAR WITH THE MUMMY.

REMEMBER, HIS ANCESTOR ONCE CAME *THIS CLOSE* TO SLICING YOUR HEAD OFF WITH ONE STROKE. WE DON'T WANT THAT HUNTER'S BLOOD WITHIN HIM AWAKENED.

NOT EVEN AS A ROLE-PLAYING PROP.

DON'T EVEN THINK FOR A MINUTE ABOUT GIVING WATANABE-KUN THAT BLADE.



...YOU REALLY ARE A CALLOUS ONE... YOU'D BETTER RUN FROM HIM WHILE YOU CAN, WATANABE-KUN...

YOU'RE THE LAST GUY I WANT TREATING ME LIKE SOME SORT OF DEVIANT...

WHAT THE...

BUT REMEMBER, IF YOU WANT TO PLAY THIS DANGEROUS GAME, THE CONSEQUENCES ARE *YOUR* RESPONSIBILITY.

WELL... YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN AN UBER-MASOCHIST.

YEAH, YEAH. BYE.

WELL, DEVIANT OR NOT - WHATEVER, JUST HURRY AND GET THAT SUIT OF ARMOR'S HEAD! IT'LL RUST!

OH! WAIT A SECOND. SPEAKING OF HEADS -



DO YOU REALLY THINK IT WAS A CO-INCIDENCE THAT YOU TWO MET?

HE ONLY MANAGED TO TAKE OFF MY ARM - I KEPT MY HEAD.

YEAH, BUT IT WAS CLOSE.

UGH... AGAIN WITH STORIES FROM THE ANCIENT PAST...



I SMELL
BLOOD...

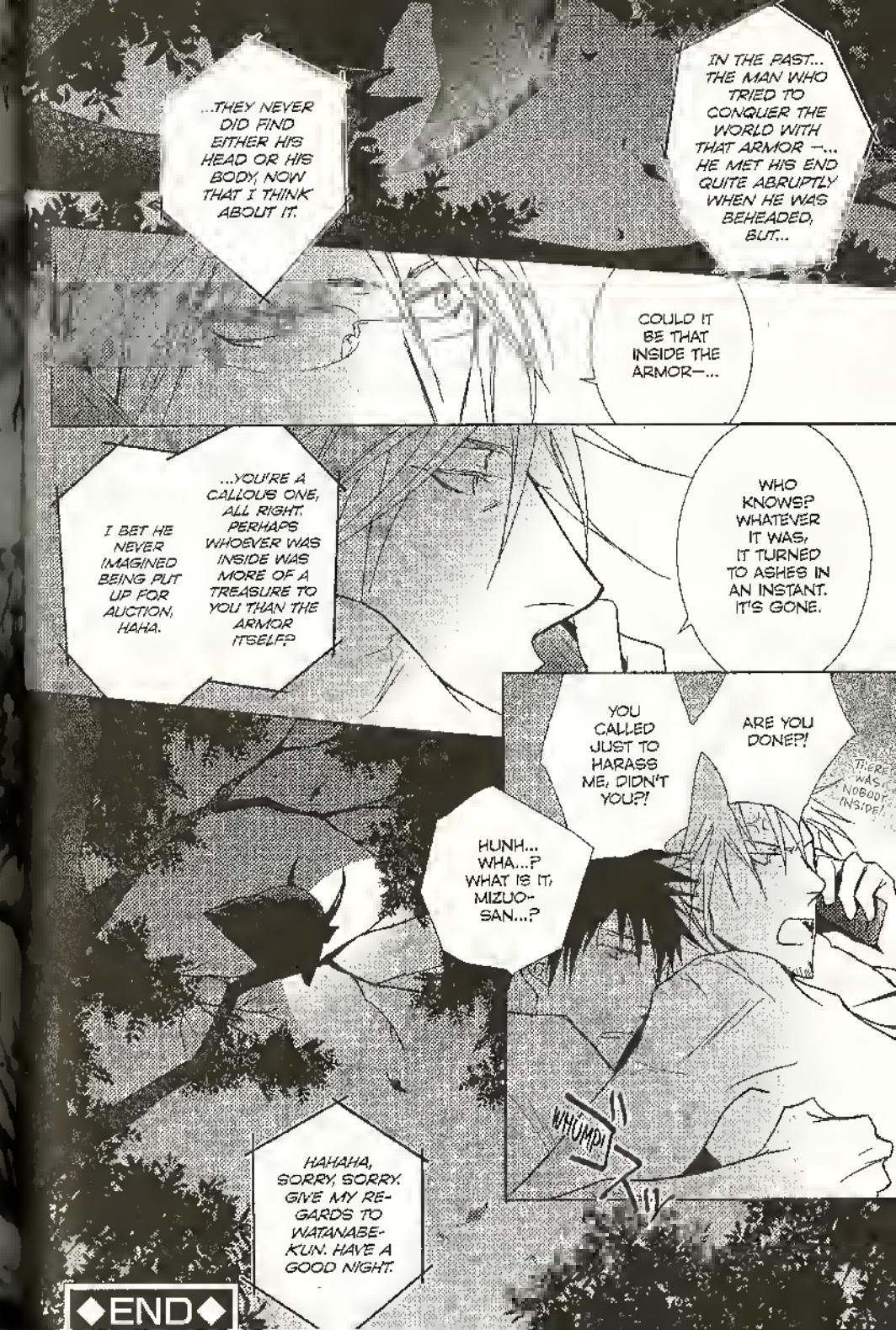
IS IT AN
ANIMAL?

RUSTLE

!

SNAP!

薄紅葉



...THEY NEVER
DID FIND
EITHER HIS
HEAD OR HIS
BODY, NOW
THAT I THINK
ABOUT IT.

IN THE PAST...
THE MAN WHO
TRIED TO
CONQUER THE
WORLD WITH
THAT ARMOR --...
HE MET HIS END
QUITE ABRUPTLY
WHEN HE WAS
BEHEADED,
BUT...

COULD IT
BE THAT
INSIDE THE
ARMOR--...

I BET HE
NEVER
IMAGINED
BEING PUT
UP FOR
AUCTION,
HAHA.

...YOU'RE A
CALLOUS ONE,
ALL RIGHT.
PERHAPS
WHOEVER WAS
INSIDE WAS
MORE OF A
TREASURE TO
YOU THAN THE
ARMOR
ITSELF?

WHO
KNOWS?
WHATEVER
IT WAS,
IT TURNED
TO ASHES IN
AN INSTANT.
IT'S GONE.

YOU
CALLED
JUST TO
HARASS
ME, DIDN'T
YOU?!

ARE YOU
DONE?!

HUNH...
WHA...P
WHAT IS IT,
MIZUO-
SAN...?

THERE
WAS
NOBODY
INSIDE!

WHUMPI!

HAHAHA,
SORRY, SORRY.
GIVE MY RE-
GARDS TO
WATANABE-
KUN. HAVE A
GOOD NIGHT.

◆END◆

HMMPH...
DOESN'T
MATTER.

GUESS
I'M
LOST
FOR
SURE
NOW.

I'VE
PASSED
THIS WAY
BEFORE...

I NEVER
DID
MANAGE TO
FIND OUT
WHERE MY
OLD MAN
HAD BEEN
GETTING
HIS IRON
SAND...

SINCE I
CAN'T DELIVER
THE SWORD,
ALL THAT'S
WAITING FOR
ME IS A
BEHEADING.

ANYHOW—
I WOULD
NEVER HAVE
BEEN ABLE
TO MAKE A
SWORD LIKE
THAT MYSELF.

LOST
YOUR
WAY?

WHAT'S
THE
MATTER?

薄紅葉

AUTUMN LEAVES うすもみじ

I HEAR
THERE
WASN'T A
SINGLE
DROP OF
BLOOD LEFT
IN HIM, LIKE
HE'D BEEN
DRAINED
DRY.

THIS IS
JUST A
RUMOR,
BUT...

TINKLE...

HE MUST
HAVE RUN
INTO A
BEAR.
REST HIS
SOUL...

THEY FOUND
THE MASTER
BLACKSMITH
DEAD IN THE
MOUNTAINS.

IT WAS
NO BEAR
THAT
KILLED
HIM.




BLACK-SMITH?

I'M A BLACK-SMITH FROM THE VILLAGE BELOW.

YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A HUNTER.

WHAT WERE YOU DOING IN THESE HILLS?



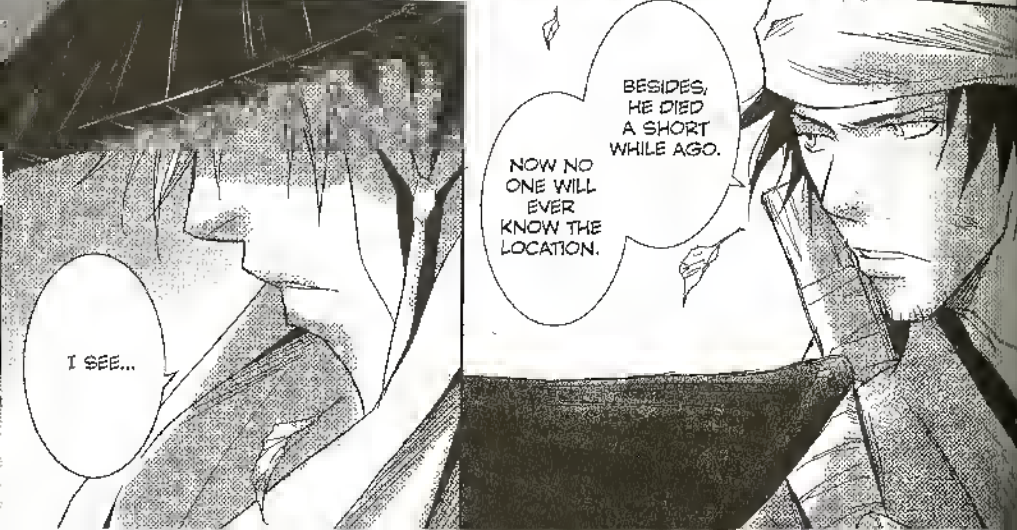
THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR IN THESE MOUNTAINS.

I STILL DON'T KNOW WHERE MY OLD MAN'S SOURCE OF FINE IRON SAND IS LOCATED.



NAH... HE'S MY FATHER, BUT ALSO MY MASTER — HE DOESN'T SHARE HIS TRADE SECRETS THAT EASILY.

CAN'T YOU JUST ASK HIM?




BESIDES, HE DIED A SHORT WHILE AGO. NOW NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW THE LOCATION.

I SEE...



THERE ARE WILD ANIMALS IN THIS AREA, TOO.

THE SUN WILL BE SETTING SOON.



WELL, IF YOU WANT ME TO ROB YOU I'D BE GLAD TO OBLIGE, BUT...

I THOUGHT YOU WERE A BANDIT FOR SURE!

A MONK...?

YOUR LIGHT CLOTHING IS ALL THE MORE REASON YOU SHOULD LEAVE THESE MOUNTAINS BEFORE THE TEMPERATURE DROPS.

SHALL I ESCORT YOU?

URK!

IN FACT, YOUR CLOTHES LOOK MORE VALUABLE THAN MINE.

HMPH... GO AHEAD, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, I HAVEN'T GOT ANYTHING FOR YOU TO TAKE.

...SO IT SEEMS.



WELL,
MY OLD
MAN'S DEAD...

WHY?

AND THE
SWORD COM-
MISSIONED
BY THE
EMPEROR
WAS
NEVER
FINISHED.



AS FOR MY
FAMILY'S
BUSINESS...
THIS MAY BE
THE END OF
THE ROAD.

HUH...
I GUESS
YOU'VE
BEEN
THROUGH
SOME
STUFF,
TOO.

I DIDN'T
STAY TO
TAKE
AFTER THE
BUSINESS,
A BARBER'S
THOUGH.

I NEVER
KNEW MY
REAL
PARENTS.
AS A CHILD,
I WAS
ADOPTED BY
A BARBER'S
FAMILY.



AND
BESIDES,
YOU NEED
MORE THAN
ONE PERSON
TO FORGE A
SWORD.

IT'S NOT THAT
EASY. WHAT
THE EMPEROR
WANTS IS A
SWORD MADE
BY SOMEONE
SKILLED LIKE
MY FATHER.

THEN WHY
DON'T YOU
MAKE IT?



AND IF
YOU CAN'T
DELIVER
THE
SWORD?

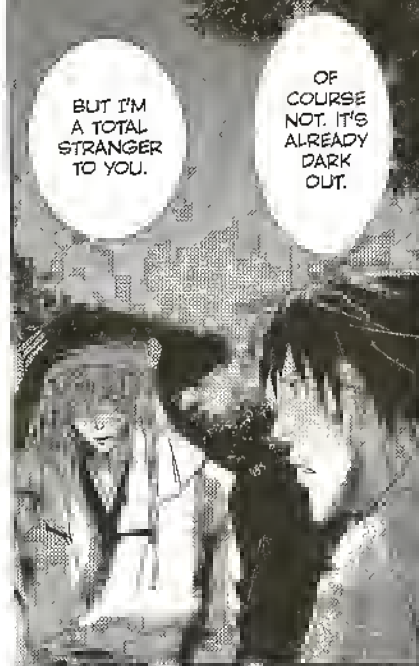


WE DID, BUT
THEY WERE
AFRAID OF
GETTING
CAUGHT UP
IN THE
BLAME AND
QUIT.

YOU HAVE
NO OTHER
APPREN-
TICES?



I
SUPPOSE
I'LL BE
HAILED
IN.



BUT I'M
A TOTAL
STRANGER
TO YOU.

OF
COURSE
NOT. IT'S
ALREADY
DARK
OUT.

IT'S NOT
THE FINEST
PLACE IN
THE
WORLD,
BUT COME
ON IN.

SORRY FOR
MAKING
YOU
SHEPHERD
ME ALL THE
WAY HOME
LIKE THIS.

YOU
DON'T
MIND?



BUT I GUESS
IT WOULDN'T
HURT TO
KNOW YOUR
NAME. MINE'S
SOICHI -
WHAT'S
YOURS?

OH...WELL,
I'LL TELL YOU
UP FRONT -
YOU'LL FIND
NOTHING
WORTH TAKING
IN THE HOUSE.
THERE'S ONLY
SCRAP IRON.



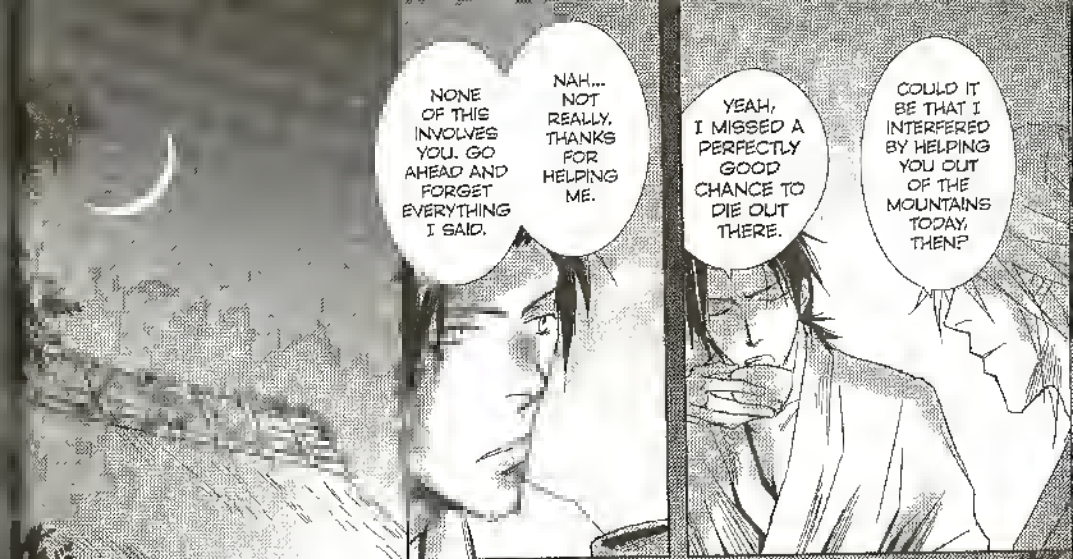
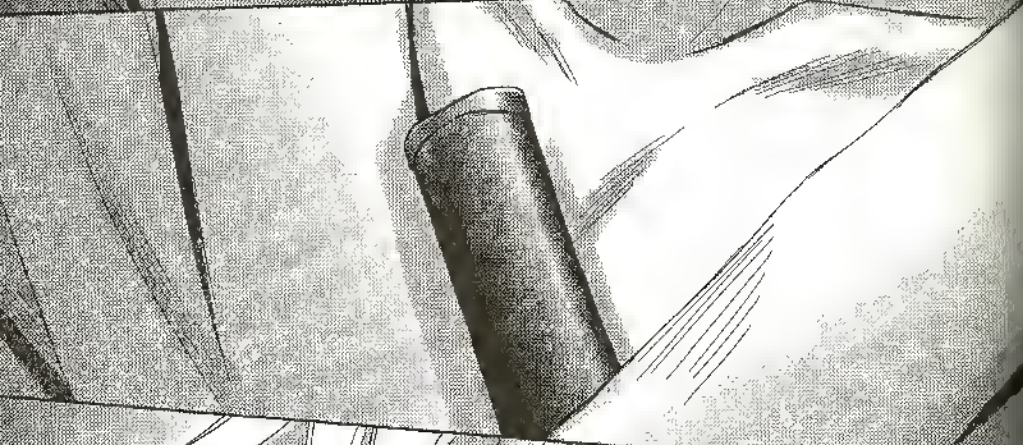
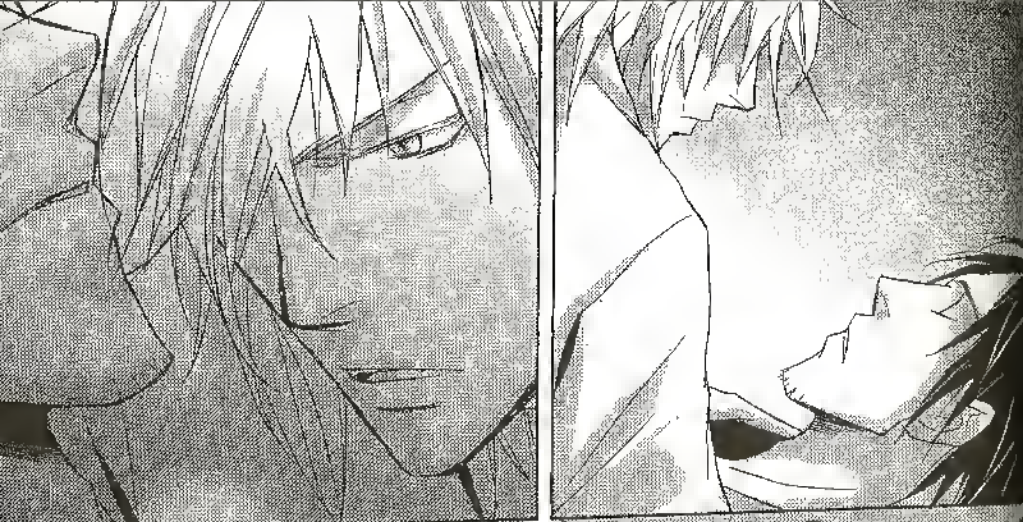
SETTSU,
HUH? THAT'S
RIGHT
NEAR THE
CITY.

WHAT'S
YOUR
FAMILY'S
OCCUPA-
TION?

...OF
IBARAKI.

I...
WAS
BORN IN
SETTSU,
MIZUO
VILLAGE.

MY
NAME IS
KURE-
HA...



NONE
OF THIS
INVOLVES
YOU. GO
AHEAD AND
FORGET
EVERYTHING
I SAID.

NAH...
NOT
REALLY.
THANKS
FOR
HELPING
ME.

YEAH,
I MISSED A
PERFECTLY
GOOD
CHANCE TO
DIE OUT
THERE.

COULD IT
BE THAT I
INTERFERED
BY HELPING
YOU OUT
OF THE
MOUNTAINS
TODAY,
THEN?





IS THIS
DAGGER
MY OLD
MAN LEFT
BEHIND...

THE
ONLY
THING
OF ANY
VALUE...



DID HE
LEAVE
CUZ THERE
WAS
NOTHING
HERE TO
TAKE...P



THAT'S
ONE FINE
BLADE.



N-NO
PROBLEM.



THANKS
FOR
LETTING
ME STAY
LAST
NIGHT,
BY THE
WAY.

DID I
SEEM LIKE
THE KIND
OF PERSON
WHO WOULD
LEAVE
WITHOUT
SAYING
GOOD-
BYE?



Y-YOU!
YOU WERE
STILL
HERE?



UHH...



WHERE'D
HE GO...P



I'M AT
YOUR DIS-
POSAL,
MASTER.

IT'S
MOOT...
WE WON'T
SUCCEED
ANYWAY.

...OKAY,
AGREED.

BUT ONLY
IF THE
SWORD IS
AS GOOD
AS ONE MY
FATHER
WOULD'VE
MADE.



CLANG!

I WAS
READY TO
LAUGH HIM
OFF, BUT
HE WASN'T
KIDDING!

I'M
SURPRISED
HE CAN
WORK SO
LONG WITH
THAT THIN
FRAME OF HIS.

...!

HIS HAMMER
STROKES
ARE SURE
AND TRUE,
JUST LIKE
MY OLD
MAN'S.

HE
HASN'T
EVEN
BROKEN
A DROP
OF
SWEAT.



YOU...?

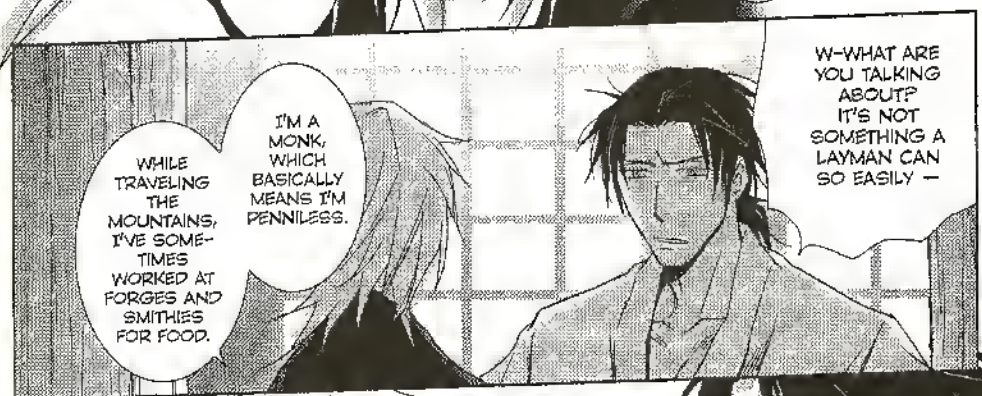
WHAT?

HUH?
I TOLD YOU
- I CAN'T
WORK
WITHOUT A
PARTNER...

AREN'T
YOU
GOING TO
GET TO
WORK?

I'M
SAYING
I'LL
ASSIST
YOU.

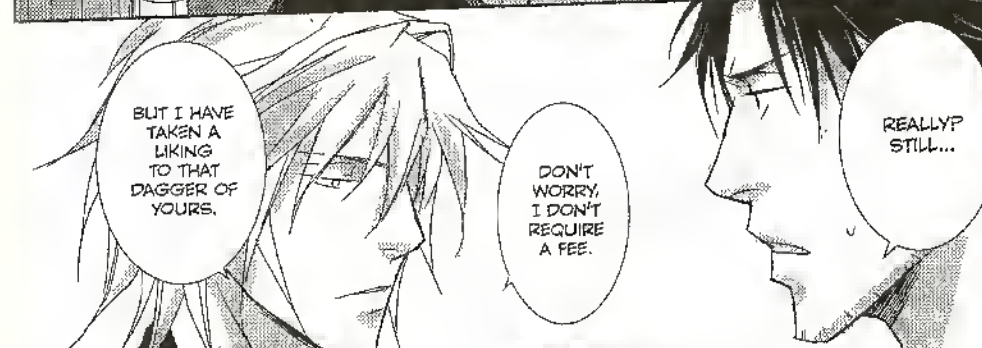
I'LL DO
IT.



WHILE
TRAVELING
THE
MOUNTAINS,
I'VE SOME-
TIMES
WORKED AT
FORGES AND
SMITHIES
FOR FOOD.

I'M A
MONK,
WHICH
BASICALLY
MEANS I'M
PENILESS.

W-WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?
IT'S NOT
SOMETHING A
LAYMAN CAN
SO EASILY -



BUT I HAVE
TAKEN A
LIKING
TO THAT
DAGGER OF
YOURS.

DON'T
WORRY,
I DON'T
REQUIRE
A FEE.

REALLY?
STILL...



THIS?!

WHA-...

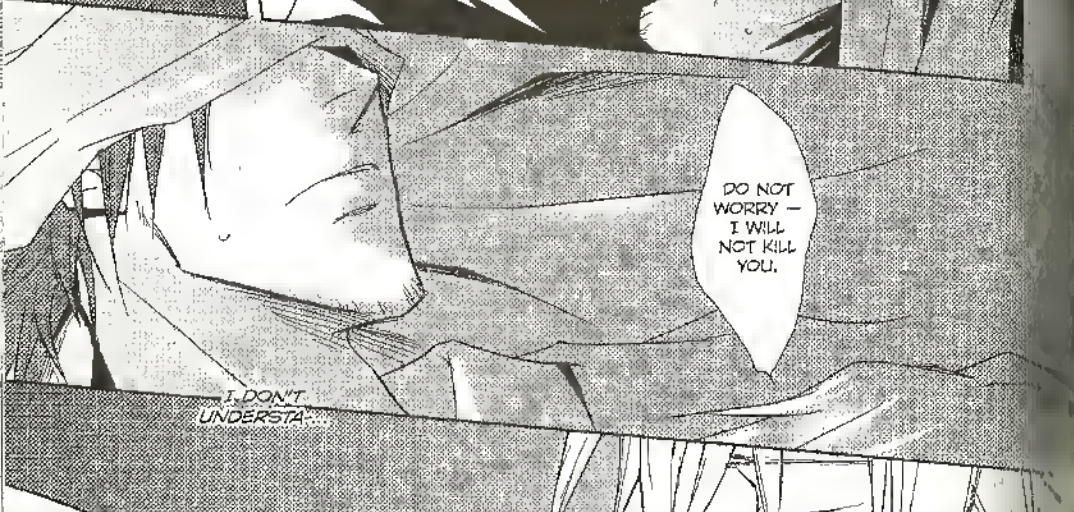
...I WOULD
LIKE YOU
TO GIVE
ME THAT
BLADE.

IF I AM
ABLE TO
HELP YOU
PRODUCE A
SWORD FINE
ENOUGH TO
OFFER UP
TO THE
EMPEROR...



KUREHA
WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?

PARDON
WHILE I
RECEIVE
SOME
OF YOUR
ES-
SENCE.



DO NOT
WORRY -
I WILL
NOT KILL
YOU.

I DON'T
UNDERSTA...



UQ...



...GIVE
THEM A
GOLDEN
HUE...

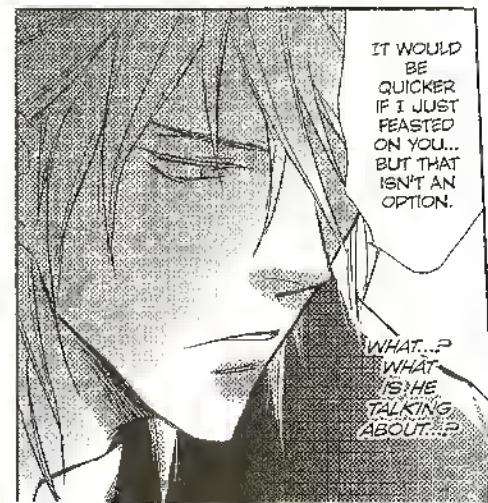
THE
SPARK'S
REFLECTED
IN HIS
EYES...



...IT
FADES.

DID
I KEEL
OVER?

HUH...?
WHY AM I
LYING
HERE...?



IT WOULD
BE
QUICKER
IF I JUST
FEASTED
ON YOU...
BUT THAT
ISN'T AN
OPTION.

WHAT...?
WHAT
IS HE
TALKING
ABOUT...?



THERE
ISN'T
MUCH
TIME.

KUREHA...

I MUST
SUPPLEMENT
HIS FADING
POWER WITH
YOURS, YOU
WHO ARE OF
THE SAME
BLOOD AS
HE.



YOU STAY
AND REST.



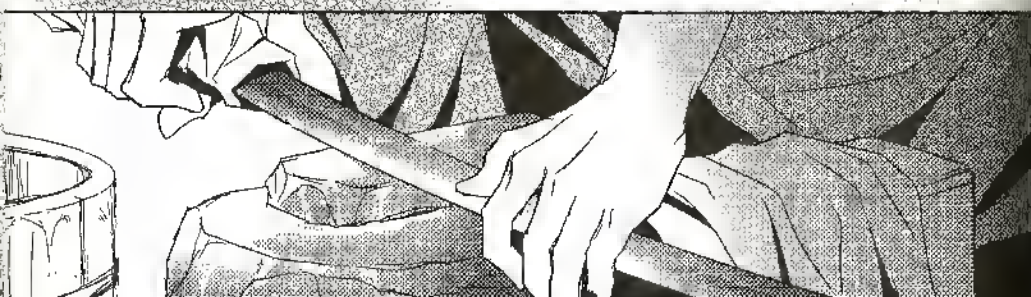
I...I SEE.
SORRY FOR THE
TROUBLE.

I WENT
TO HAUL
SOME
WATER.
WHAT
OF IT?

THE FAINT
SMELL
OF
BLOOD...

IT'S JUST
THE METALLIC
SMELL OF
IRON WHICH
SATURATES
US BOTH.

NO...

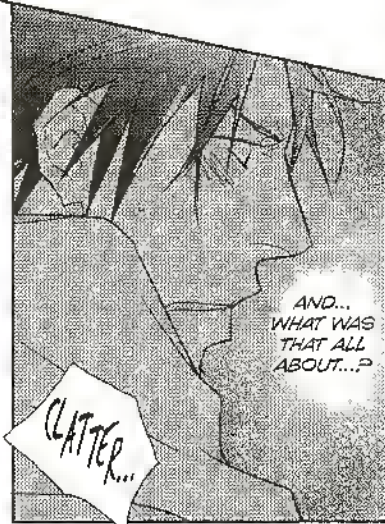


FOOF~

HE'S
DOING
MUCH
BETTER
AT THIS
THAN
I AM



IT'S NO
GOOD -
I CAN'T
CONCENTRATE.



AND...
WHAT WAS
THAT ALL
ABOUT...?

CLATTER...

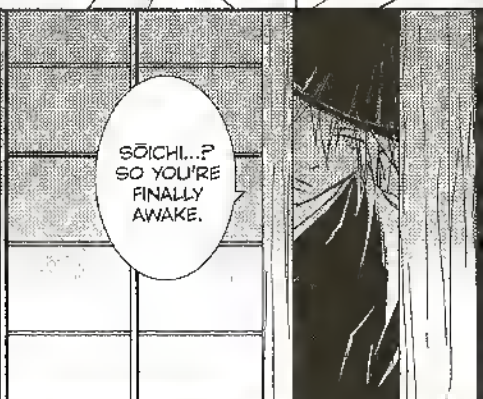


...?!

W-WHEN
DID I FALL
ASLEEP?



K-
KUREHA?!



SŌICHI...?
SO YOU'RE
FINALLY
AWAKE.



D-DID
YOU GO
OUT
SOME-
WHERE?

YES.

...HUHP
WHAT
THE -...?
THE SUN'S
ALREADY
SET.

IT...
MUST HAVE
BEEN MY
IMAGINATION...



Y-YEAH,
I'M FINE
NOW!

YOU
SHOULDN'T
PUSH
YOURSELF
TO THE
POINT OF
FAINTING.

ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT?
THE HEAT
OF THE
FLAMES
MUST HAVE
GOTTEN
TO YOU.

...MY OLD
MAN NEVER
TOLD ANYONE
WHERE HE
OBTAINED THE
IRON USED
FOR HIS
SWORD-
MAKING.

SO,
IN THE
END...

IN OTHER
WORDS,
HE DIDN'T
THINK
I WAS
WORTH
BEING
TOLD.

HE WAS
GOING TO
LET YOU
TAKE OVER
THE BUSI-
NESS
AFTER HIM,
WASN'T
HEP?

THAT'S
NOT
TRUE.

IF I
CAN'T
MAKE THIS
SWORD,
I TAKE THE
BLAME —
THAT'S
ALL.

IT'S ALL
RIGHT —
YOU DON'T
NEED TO
CONSOLE
ME.

I THINK
YOU'VE
HAD
ENOUGH
DRINK FOR
TONIGHT.

SOICHI...

THERE'S NO
FOOLING THE
EMPEROR. DON'T
BLAME ME IF HE
GETS MAD AT
YOU, TOO —

WHY
ARE YOU
DOING
ALL OF
THIS,
ANYWAY?

ANOTHER
FUNERAL...

STILL
NOT
SATIS-
FIEDP

I CAN
KEEP
HAMMER-
ING,
IF YOU
WANT TO
CON-
TINUE.

...BUT
WE'VE
GOT NO
MORE
IRON LEFT.

MAN,
YOU'VE
SURE GOT
STAMINA
FOR ONE
SO
SKINNY...

LET'S
CALL IT
A DAY.

TIME FOR
A BATH
AND
SOME
SAKE...
I COULD
USE IT.



BESIDES, IT'S ALL HAZY - I CAN'T REMEMBER MOST OF WHAT HAPPENED ANYWAY! WHAT ARE YOU THINKING...

QUIT ASSUMING THINGS ON YOUR OWN!

YEAH, I THOUGHT SO. OF COURSE YOU DID.

SORRY, DID YOU NOT ENJOY IT?

W-... WHA-...?!

WHA-... THA-...

-NG...

HE MUST BE USING SOME SORT OF ENCHANTMENT. WITH IT, HE SEES RIGHT THROUGH ME -

IF IT BOTHERS YOU THAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER...

...SHALL WE DO IT AGAIN?

THERE IS ONE OTHER REASON WHY I DECIDED TO HELP...

THAT'S RIGHT - IT'S THESE EYES

I LIKE YOU.



YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT. I'M ALL FLUSTERED.

YOUR HAMMERING HAS BEEN SHAKY LATELY.

SŌICHI, HAVEN'T YOU BEEN DRINKING TOO MUCH?

HEY...!

IF YOU REALLY WANT THAT DAGGER SO BADLY, JUST TAKE IT AND LEAVE -...

WOBBLE -

AND WHOSE FAULT DO YOU THINK IT IS...?

SO, YOU RETAINED YOUR MEMORY.

OH...

WHA-...?!

IT REALLY HAPPENED.

I CAST NO SPELL.

Y-YOU! WHAT DID YOU DO TO ME LAST TIME? DID YOU CAST SOME SORT OF SPELL OVER ME? YOU FAKE MONK!

WE NEED
TO FORGE
A DEEPER-
THAN-NORMAL
CONNECTION
TO BE EFFECTIVE
WORK
PARTNERS.

IT'S NOT
AS IF I
HAVE
KNOWN
YOU VERY
LONG.

I TOLD
YOU AL-
READY...

KUREHA...
YOU —

I WANT
TO HELP
YOU.

AFTER THE
WORK IS
OVER,
WHAT DO
YOU PLAN
TO DO?
I —...

IT'S
NOT
OVER
YET.

DON'T
BRING IT
UP AT A
TIME LIKE
THIS.

YOU
REALLY
ARE A
CAD.

SŌICHI!
WAKE UP!

JUST
WHAT
ARE
YOU...?

NN...!
DON'T
WORRY,
I WON'T
CHARGE
YOU ANY-
THING.

AND AT
FIRST I
THOUGHT
YOU HAD
NO TASTE
FOR THIS,
BUT —

IS
STUFF
LIKE
THIS A
PART OF
YOUR OCCU-
PATION,
TOOP

DON'T
BE SO
CRASS.

WHAT'S
YOUR
REAL
INTEN-
TION...?!

YOU...!

...IT AP-
PEARS
I WAS
WRONG.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME THAT!

YES... I SUPPOSE YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH SLEEP.

NEVER MIND THAT NOW. WE CAN'T TAKE OUR EYES OFF THE FIRE FOR A GOOD WHILE. WE NEED TO TAKE TURNS WATCHING IT.

BETTER KEEP AWAKE, MASTER.



THE REST IS UP TO YOU.

NOW... I DON'T KNOW HOW THIS WILL TURN OUT.



IT SUITS YOU. YOU'RE MORE HIS SIZE ANYWAY.

MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU CAN HAMMER ANYTHING, DOESN'T IT?

ARE YOU SUREP ME, WEARING YOUR FATHER'S CEREMONIAL GARB?



IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

PRAY FOR YOUR FATHER TO GUIDE OUR HANDS.

WHEN THIS IS COMPLETE -

WE'VE GOT NO MORE IRON TO SPARE... IF THIS DOESN'T WORK, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO PREPARE TO LOSE OUR HEADS.



WHOSE FAULT DO YOU THINK IT IS? AND HOW COME YOU'RE FINE?

BESIDES, WE'RE OUT OF IRON...

THAT'S WHY WE'RE GOING TO SMELT SOME NOW. GO ON, GET YOUR FACE WASHED.

ARGH... MY HEAD IS KILLING ME...

HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO SLEEP?

HURRY OR THE SUN WILL SET AGAIN TODAY.



I GOT THE INFO FROM AN OLD CONNECTION - SOMEONE I DEALT WITH IN THE PAST.

NO... VILLAGERS AREN'T ABLE TO ENTER. THE MOUNTAIN FOLK CLOSELY GUARD THE PLACE.

WHY'D YOU GO ALONE? IT MUST HAVE BEEN ROUGH. I WOULD'VE GONE WITH YOU...

YES, SINCE YOU DIDN'T SEEM UP TO IT.

IRON SAND... YOU WENT OUT AND GOT THIS?

URK...

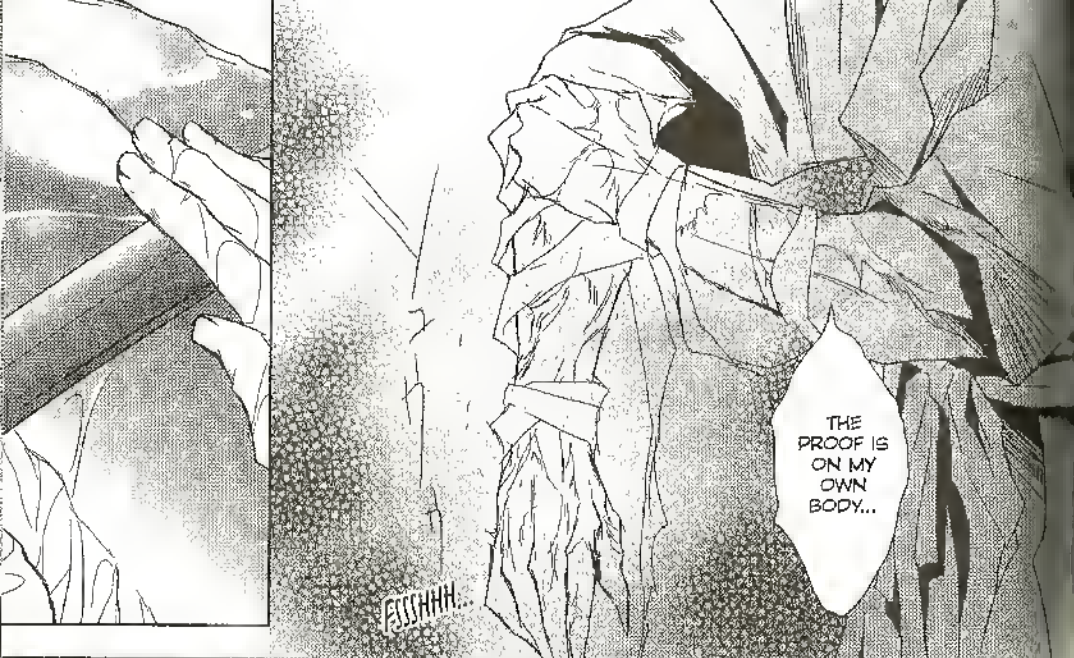


BUT I FIGURE THE STEEL MUST BE OF SOME QUALITY TO WARRANT THEIR HIDING THE PLACE.

I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S THE SAME SOURCE THAT YOU WERE SEARCHING FOR...

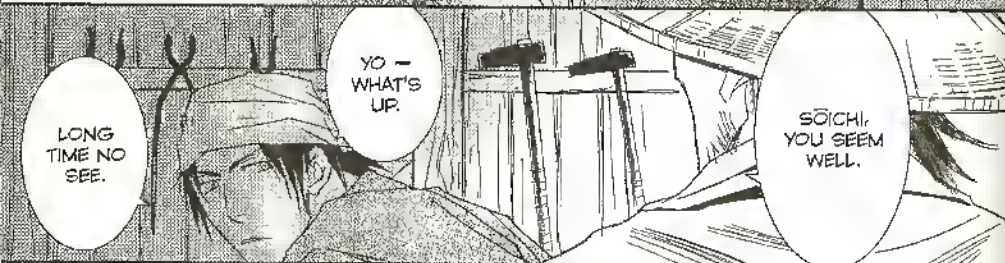
EVEN I'VE NEVER BEEN IN THAT FAR.

THE TERRITORY OF THE GUYS DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS? MY OLD MAN ALWAYS FORBADE ME TO GO THERE.



THE
PROOF IS
ON MY
OWN
BODY...

ESSHHH...



YO —
WHAT'S
UP.

LONG
TIME NO
SEE.

SŌICHI,
YOU SEEM
WELL.



SŌICHI...
THERE'S
BEEN
ANOTHER
DEATH.



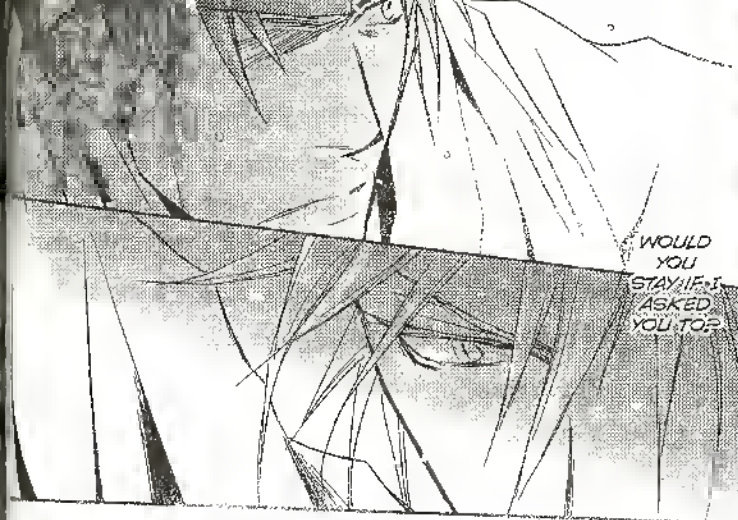
HE'S AN
OUT-
SIDER,
RIGHT?

YEAH...
BUT HE'S
A GOOD
WORKER.
USED TO
WORK AT A
FORGE, AP-
ARENTLY.



I HEAR
YOU'VE
GOT A NEW
APPREN-
TICE.

UH, WELL...
HE'S NOT
REALLY AN
APPRENTICE,
SO MUCH
AS MUCH-
NEEDED
ASSIS-
TANCE...



WOULD
YOU
STAY IF I
ASKED
YOU TO?



WHAT
ARE YOU
GOING
TO DO?



OKAY...
I'LL FINISH
THE REST.
UP TO THE
QUENCHING.



TRULY...
THAT
BLADE IS
ONE THAT
CAN SLAY
DEMONS.

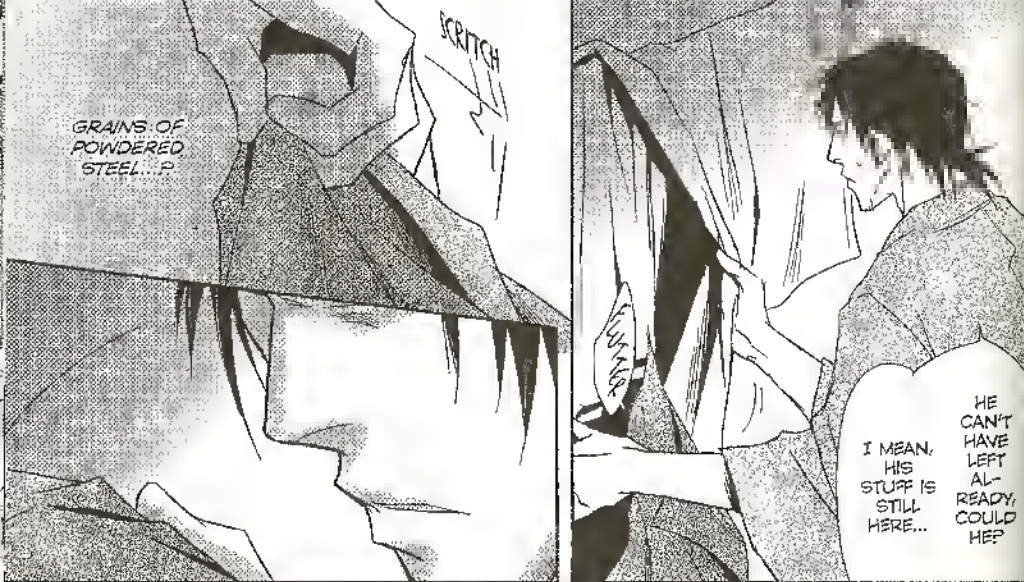
SLUGS...
WELL, IT
LOOKS
LIKE WE
CAN
AVOID
BEING
BE-
HEADED.



OH...
YEAH,
SURE.
YOU'VE
BEEN AT
IT FOR
QUITE A
WHILE.

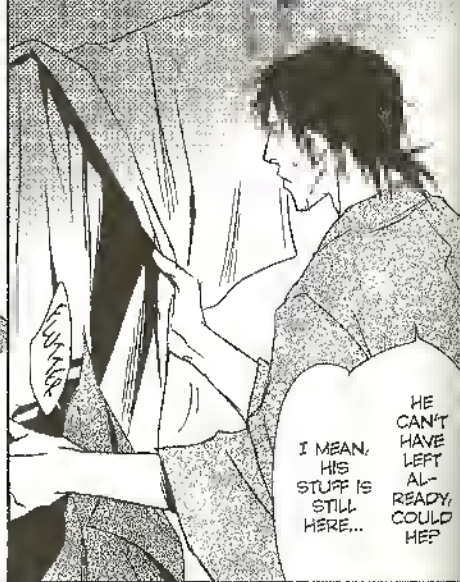


SŌICHI...
IS IT ALL
RIGHT IF
I REST A
BIT?



GRAINS OF
POWDERED
STEEL...P

SCRITCH



I MEAN,
HIS
STUFF IS
STILL
HERE...

HE
CAN'T
HAVE
LEFT
AL-
READY,
COULD
HE?



THE
SCENT OF
BLOOD...



THERE
WAS NO
EVIDENCE
OF A BEAR
ATTACK
NEAR THE
BODY.

WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN
...?

WHAT...?

HE WAS
FOUND
JUST LIKE
YOUR
FATHER.

AND IT
WAS NO
ORDINARY
DEATH,
EITHER.



WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING?
WHAT'S
THAT GOT
TO DO
WITH
ANY-
THING?

AND WHEN I
THINK ABOUT
IT, IT'S JUST
AROUND THE
TIME YOUR
NEW HELP
ARRIVED...

THAT THESE
DEATHS
HAVE BEEN
HAPPENING.



...HAS
BROUGHT
MISFOR-
TUNE
DOWN
FROM THE
MOUN-
TAINS.

THEY'RE
SAYING
THAT YOUR
NEW AP-
PRENTICE...

THE ELDER
FOLK
IN THE
VILLAGE
ARE
MAKING
A FUSS.



HE'S
STILL NOT
BACK...

THAT'S
RIDICULOUS.
YEAH, HE'S
A BIT
MYSTERIOUS
AND ALL,
BUT...

WHO KNOWS
WHAT OTHER
STUPID
RUMORS
THEY'LL BE
STARTING...

WHERE
ARE YOU,
KUREHA?
MISSING,
AT A TIME
LIKE
THIS...

YOU MUST BE MISTAKEN. IT'S JUST SOME CLOTH I FOUND THAT WAS LYING AROUND.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH IT? IT'S ONE MY FATHER USED TO KEEP WITH HIM.

I COULDN'T FIND IT ANYWHERE IN THE HOUSE BEFORE NOW.

HE MADE IT OUT OF AN OLD KIMONO — I REMEMBER IT.

SOICHI... I COULD JUST ERASE YOUR MEMORY OF ALL THIS...

BUT THEN... ALL OUR EFFORTS UP UNTIL NOW WOULD BE POINTLESS.

KUREHA...! TELL ME THE TRUTH! DID YOU MEET MY FATHER?

THE IRON SAND YOU BROUGHT BACK — WAS IT THE SAME AS MY FATHER'S — ...

SO... HAVE YOU COME TO CUT ME DOWN, TOOP

YES, IT'S TRUE.

I AM THE ONE WHO KILLED YOUR FATHER.

IT'S NOTHING, SOICHI. GO BACK.

NO-THING...? THOSE GUYS... WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING...?

...KUREHA

HURRY AND GO BACK. STAY OUT OF IT. I'LL CLEAN UP.

DON'T TELL ME YOU —

THEY SUR-ROUNDED ME — A MOB ARMED WITH SHOVELS AND HOES. I GUESS I'M NOT WELCOME HERE.

A CARRYING CLOTH THAT BELONGED TO MY FATHER — I FOUND IT IN YOUR COAT.

IT'S GOT THE ON-EDGE.

...THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL DEATHS AROUND HERE LATELY.

KURE-HA...

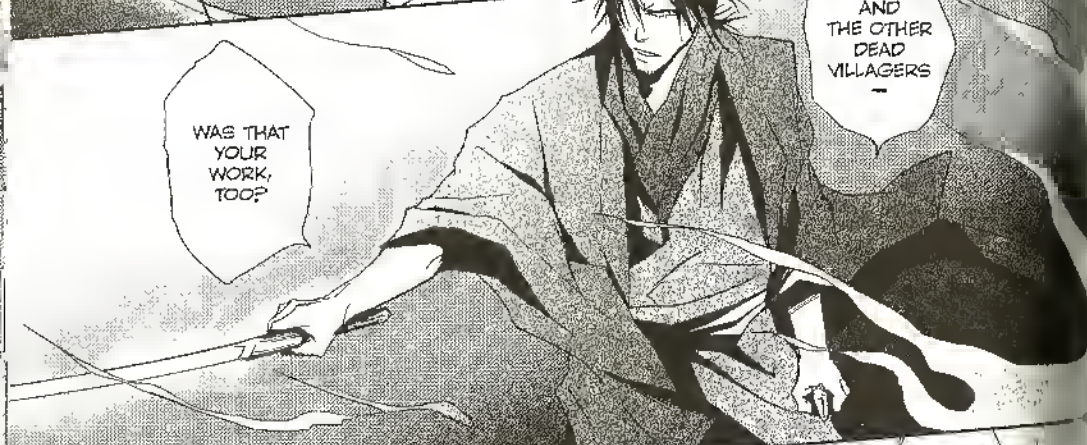
I HEAR THERE ARE A LOT OF BEARS THIS YEAR.



....!

IT WAS I.

IT WAS NO BEAR WHICH FED ON AND DRAINED YOUR FATHIM OF HIS BLOOD -



WAS THAT YOUR WORK, TOOP?

AND THE OTHER DEAD VILLAGERS -



!

...FOR HAMMERING THE STEEL.

YES... I NEEDED TO KEEP UP MY STRENGTH ...



...FOR HIM TO CRAFT A SWORD THAT COULD BE USED AGAINST DEMONS.

IT WAS AN IMPERIAL ORDER...



NORMALLY, I WOULD HAVE JUST CUT HIM DOWN AND LEFT HIM TO DIE...BUT HE CARRIED AN INTERESTING DOCUMENT.



WHEN I RAN INTO YOUR FATHER.

I WAS HIDING FROM PURSUIT IN THESE MOUNTAINS...

I DIDN'T WANT HIM TALKING BACK AT THE VILLAGE, SO I TOOK CARE OF HIM.

SO, YOU ARE A BANDIT AFTER ALL...



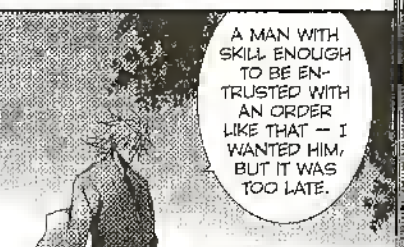
...I'M SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU.

SO I CAME TO YOU, THE INHERITOR OF HIS SKILL.



THE KNOWLEDGE WAS PASSED TO ME THROUGH CONSUMING HIS FLESH AND BLOOD.

WH-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING ...?



A MAN WITH SKILL ENOUGH TO BE ENTRUSTED WITH AN ORDER LIKE THAT - I WANTED HIM, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE.

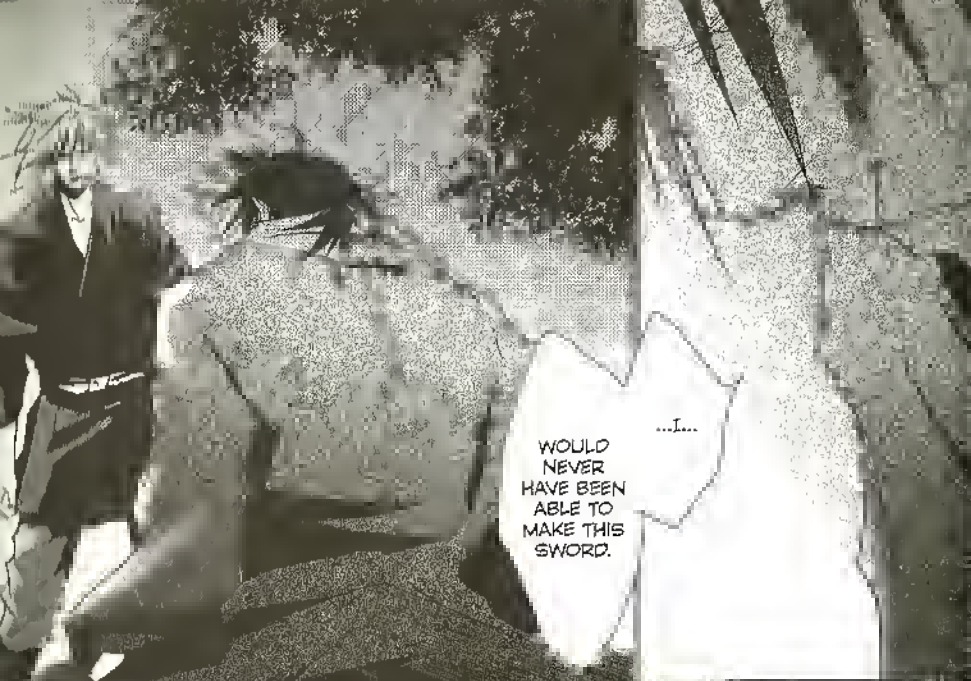


WE JUST DID. IT'S HOW THAT SWORD YOU HOLD CAME TO BE.

I'M NO EQUAL. I NEVER LEARNED HOW TO MAKE SUCH A THING -

THE FORGING TECHNIQUE WE USED WAS PASSED DOWN THROUGH YOUR BLOODLINE FOR AGES...A SECRET GIVEN TO ONE CHILD IN EACH GENERATION.

THE STEEL IN THAT BLADE WILL BANISH DEMONS, AND ENDURE FOR A THOUSAND YEARS OR MORE.



WOULD
NEVER
HAVE BEEN
ABLE TO
MAKE THIS
SWORD.

...I...



BUT I
KILLED
YOUR
FATHER.



YOU
TRULY
SUCCEED-
ED IN
CRAFTING
A TRUE
DEMON-
CUTTER.



I WILL
NOT
RESIST.

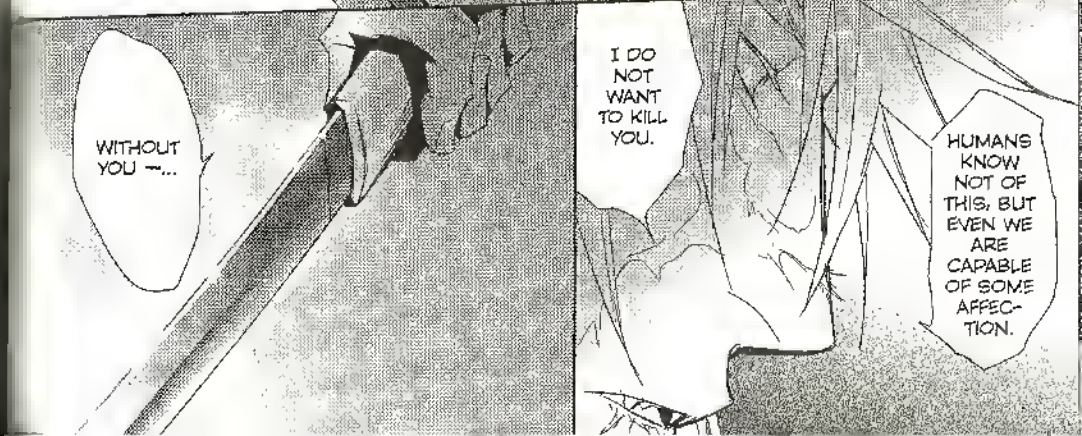
USE IT
TO CUT
DOWN A
REAL
DEMON.

I AM
SATISFIED
AT HAVING
SEEN THE
TRUE ITEM
WITH MY
OWN
EYES.
NOW —
PERFORM
THE
FINAL
TEST.

JUST IT
BEING
OUT OF
ITS
SHEATH
BURNS MY
FLESH



WHY...



WITHOUT
YOU —...

I DO
NOT
WANT
TO KILL
YOU.

HUMANS
KNOW
NOT OF
THIS, BUT
EVEN WE
ARE
CAPABLE
OF SOME
AFFEC-
TION.



...I UNDER-
STAND.

...WILL
PROBABLY
HUNT YOU
DOWN
WITH THIS
SWORD
SOMETIME.

ALTHOUGH
I'M SURE
A MORE
SKILLED
SWORDS-
MAN...

YOU'RE
NEVER TO
RETURN
HERE
AGAIN.

IN EX-
CHANGE...

MY WORK
IS DONE.



...SO LET ME
CONVEY THIS
TO YOU
WHILE I
STILL MAY:

THE
MEMORIES
I OBTAINED
THROUGH
YOUR
FATHER'S
BLOOD
WILL SOON
FACE...

THEN I
SHALL
ALSO
KEEP MY
BARGAIN.



KUREHA
...!

DO NOT
FORGET
THAT,
SŌICHI.

IT WAS
ALWAYS
YOUR
FATHER'S
INTENT TO
PASS HIS
KNOWLEDGE
AND SKILL
DOWN TO
YOU.



I'M
FULFILLING
MY END
OF THE
BARGAIN -

YOU CAN
TAKE THAT
DAGGER.

5227...S

UNLESS
YOU
BEHEAD
ME, I WILL
RETURN
TO LIFE.

BUT
SŌICHI...

SO THE
LONG
SWORD
WAS A
DECOY...
WELL
DONE.



I HEARD RUMORS OF THE FEARED IBARAKI CHILD IN THE CITY...

IN YOUR TONGUE, THEY CALL ME LON-YEH.

YES... ALTHOUGH I WAS BORN SOMEWHERE MUCH FURTHER WEST THAN CHINA.

FROM A FOREIGN LAND...P

...SO I CAME TO SEE HIM FOR MYSELF.



FINE — WE CAN FIGHT RIGHT HERE.

ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?

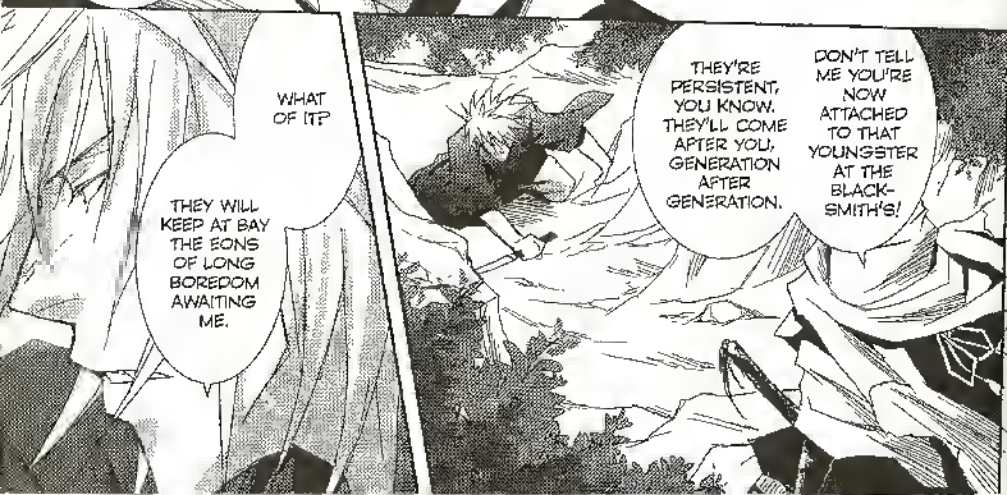
YOU'RE SIMPLY ANOTHER DEMON WHO'S BEEN DISPATCHED TO DESTROY ME, AREN'T YOU?

A LIKELY STORY...

BY THE WAY... WASN'T YOUR AIM TO PUT AN END TO THAT SWORDSMITH'S BLOODLINE?

I GUESS IT TRULY IS A DAGGER THAT CAN HARM THOSE OF OUR KIND.

YOUR WOUNDS HAVEN'T PROPERLY HEALED YET, AND THAT BLADE — WELL, I SEE IT'S A STRAIN JUST TO HOLD IT.



WHAT OF IT?

THEY WILL KEEP AT BAY THE EONS OF LONG BOREDOM AWAITING ME.

THEY'RE PERSISTENT, YOU KNOW. THEY'LL COME AFTER YOU, GENERATION AFTER GENERATION.

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE NOW ATTACHED TO THAT YOUNGSTER AT THE BLACK-SMITH'S!



THAT'S QUITE A FRIGHTENING PIECE OF WEAPONRY YOU HAVE THERE.

SO, YOU CAN ACQUIRE SKILLS FROM THE BLOOD OF A HUMAN YOU FEED OFF OF? QUITE A TALENT.

INTERESTING...

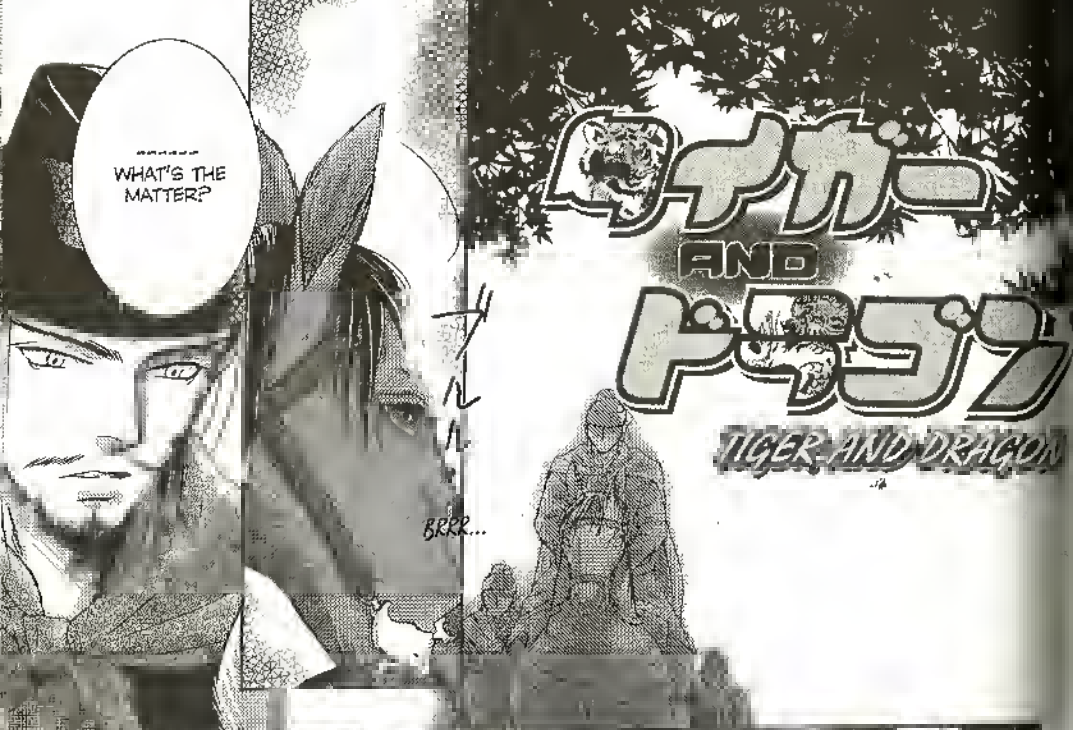


I'M FROM THE LAND OF CHINA, ACCOMPANYING SOME PRIESTS AS THEIR ESCORT.

I DIDN'T COME HERE TO STEAL YOUR TERRITORY.

EASY NOW!

YOU —...!



WHAT'S THE MATTER?

BRRR...



NEIGH



BRRHHEEE -!

!

RUSTLE

"Gedoh" literally means "off the path," meaning of the path of Buddhism; therefore, "Gedoh-maru" refers to one who is off, who has strayed from his ways, or perhaps even damned.



I'M KNOWN AS GEDOH-MARU OVER THERE, THOUGH.

IF YOU'D LIKE, DROP BY MY PLACE. FOR NOW, I RESIDE AT MOUNT GOEH IN TANBA.

I'LL PROVIDE COMPANY, IF YOU EVER GET LONELY.

I SEE... YOU'RE AN AMUSING ONE.



HMPH...

THAT NAME SUITS YOU BETTER, ACTUALLY.

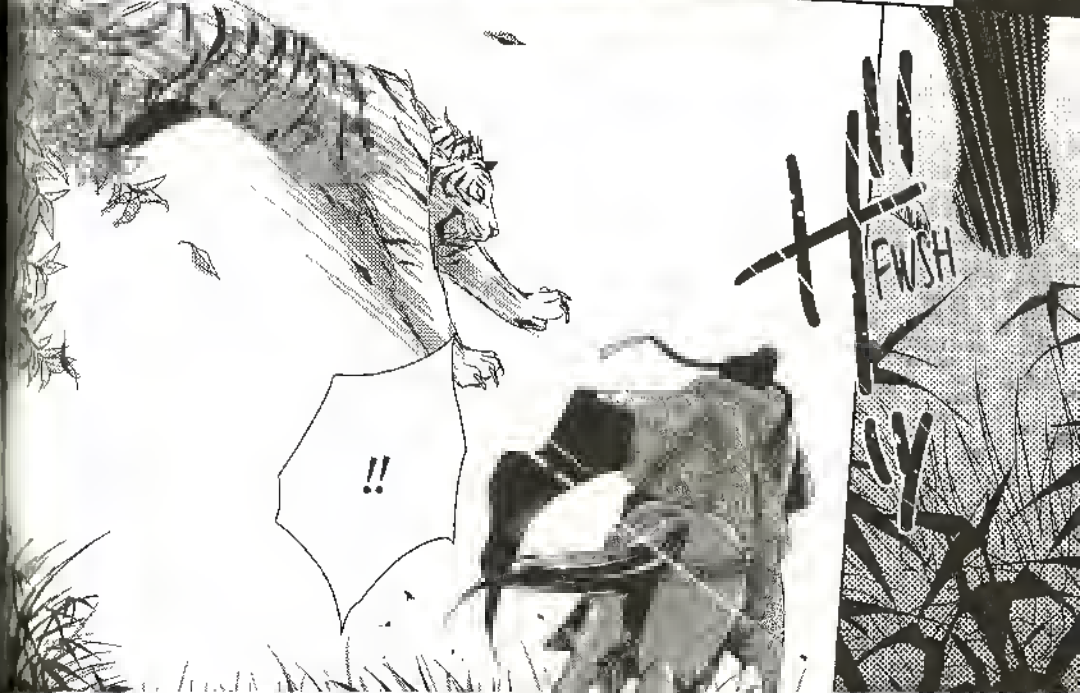
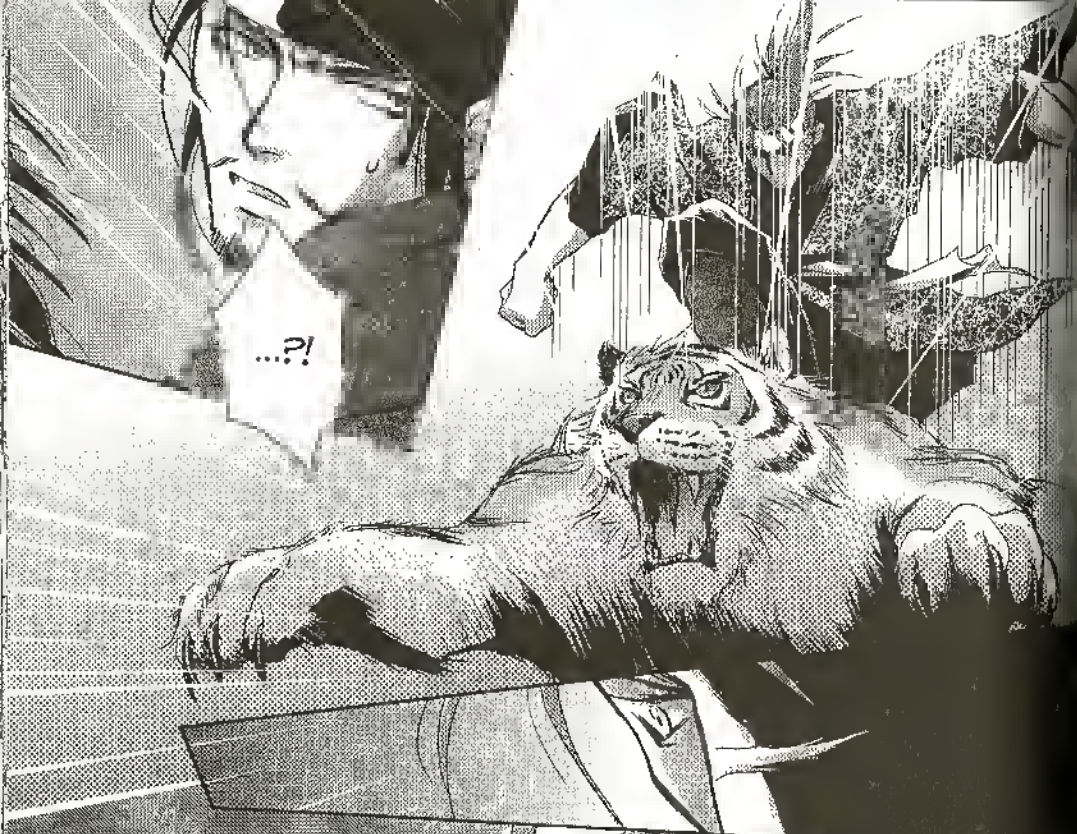


SO I'M OFTEN TOLD.



SEE YOU AROUND, IBARAKI.

◆END◆



...UGH...

OW...!

MY
SWORD —
IT'S
GONE...

...GIVE IT
BACK.

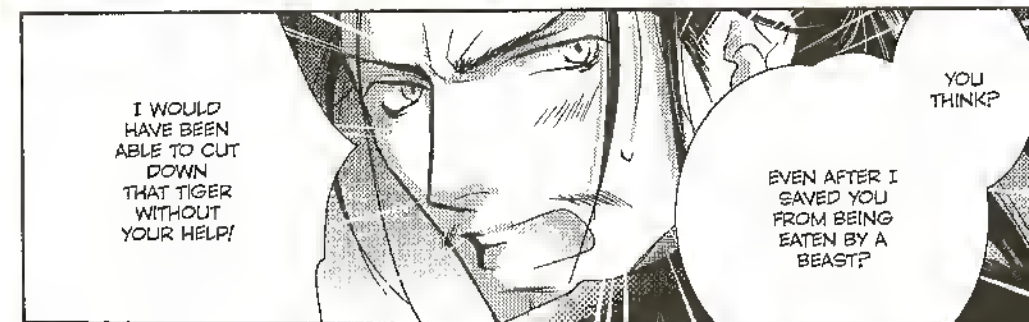
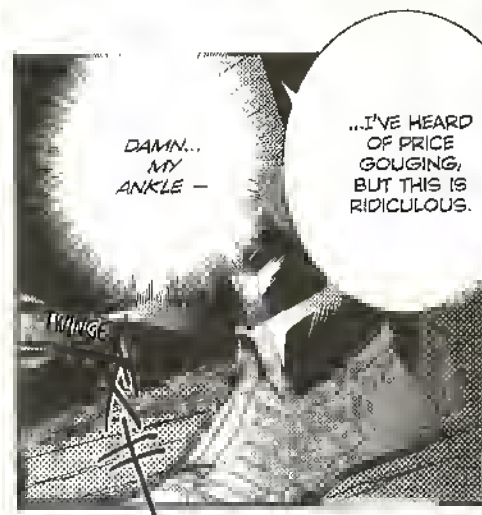
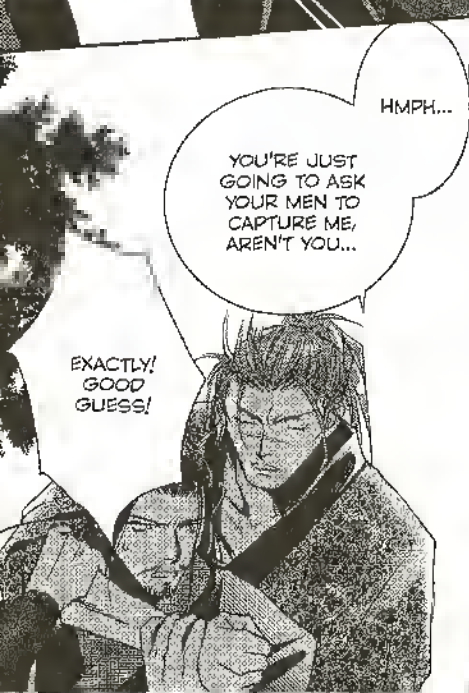
NICE
SWORD.

WHAT WAS
THAT?!

...
...!

ZWOOSH

BR
R
H
E
E
E...!





OF COURSE!
IT'S A GIFT
FROM THE
EMPEROR!

IS THIS
THING
REALLY SO
IMPORTANT
TO YOU?

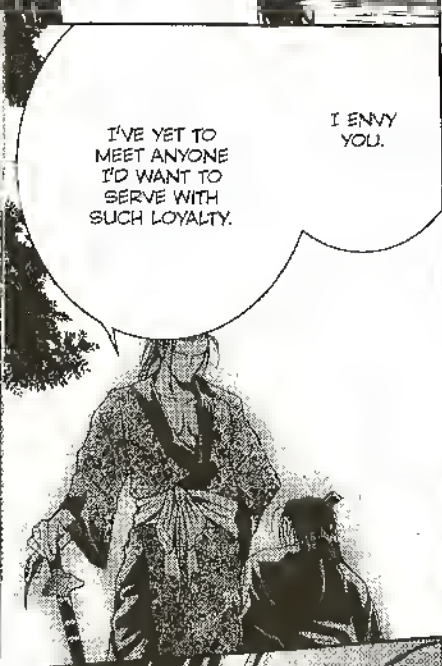
YOU'RE
A FUNNY
ONE.



W-WHAT?
WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN...?!

WELL, YOU CAN
PAY ME RIGHT
HERE AND NOW,
IF YOU WANT.

LET'S
SEE...



I'VE YET TO
MEET ANYONE
I'D WANT TO
SERVE WITH
SUCH LOYALTY.

I ENVY
YOU.

ALTHOUGH —...

I MUST
RETURN
ALIVE WITH
THAT
SWORD,
AT ANY
COST.

...I HAVE
THE FEELING
I WON'T
BE ABLE TO
BEST YOU
IN A FIGHT.



STOP...!

YOU FOOL!
WHAT DO
YOU THINK
YOU'RE
DOING...?!


I HAVEN'T
BEEN
PLEASURED
IN A LONG
WHILE.



HERE,
HAVE THIS
BACK.

...I GET THE
FEELING THEY'D
CHASE ME DOWN
TO THE ENDS OF
THE EARTH.

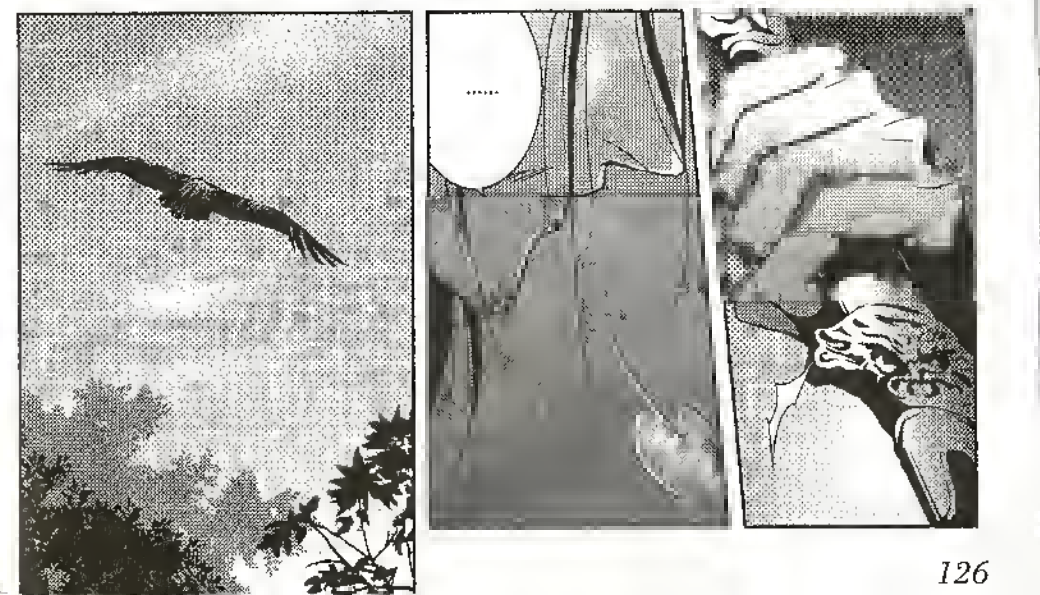
IF I HARMED
SO MUCH AS
A HAIR ON
YOUR HEAD...

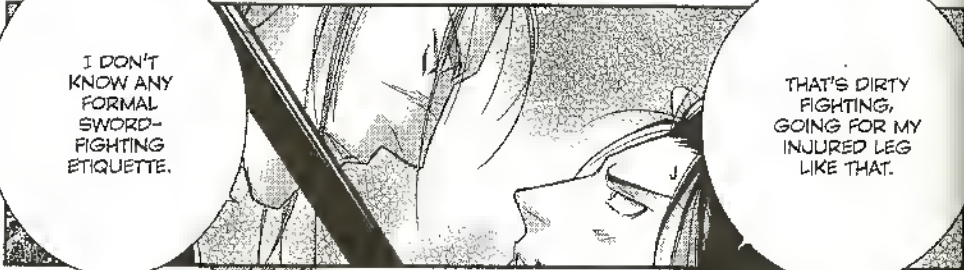


...I-IF I
DO THIS,
WILL YOU
GIVE ME
BACK MY
SWORD?

L-LOOK,
I DON'T
UNDER-
STAND YOU
AT ALL,
BUT...

PFFT!





I DON'T
KNOW ANY
FORMAL
SWORD-
FIGHTING
ETIQUETTE.

THAT'S DIRTY
FIGHTING,
GOING FOR MY
INJURED LEG
LIKE THAT.

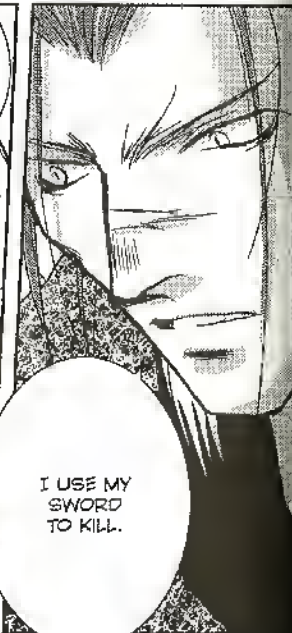


HEH...



I'VE BEEN
LOOKING
FOR A MAN
LIKE YOU.

GOOD.



I USE MY
SWORD
TO KILL.



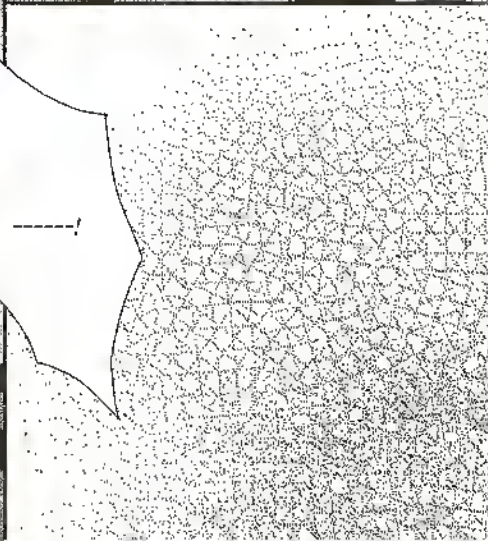
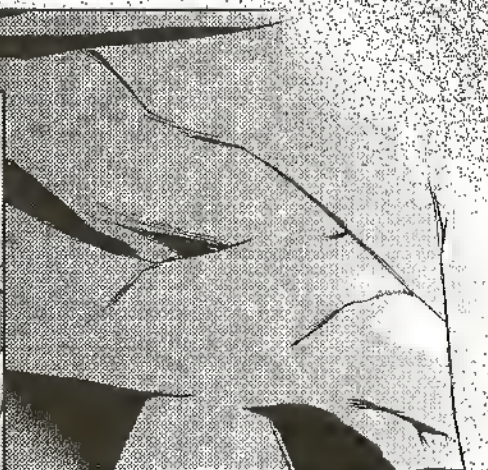
YOU WANT
TO RECRUIT
ME AS ONE
OF YOUR
SOLDIERS?

THAT'S
RIGHT.



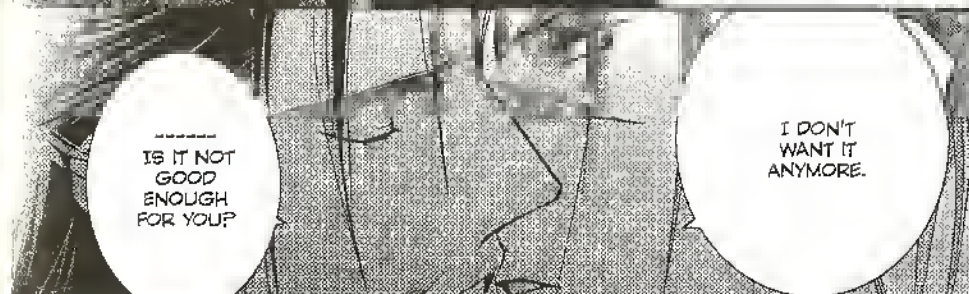


SURE,
I'LL BE
YOURS.



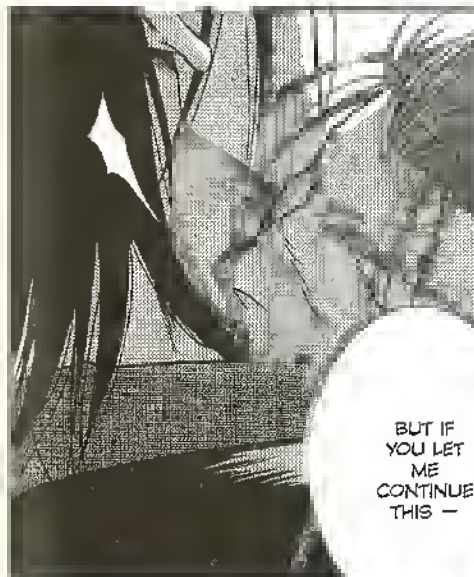
AND IF MY
SWORD IS
REALLY
WHAT YOU
WANT...

...I WILL
GIVE IT
TO YOU.



.....
IS IT NOT
GOOD
ENOUGH
FOR YOU?

I DON'T
WANT IT
ANYMORE.



BUT IF
YOU LET
ME
CONTINUE
THIS —



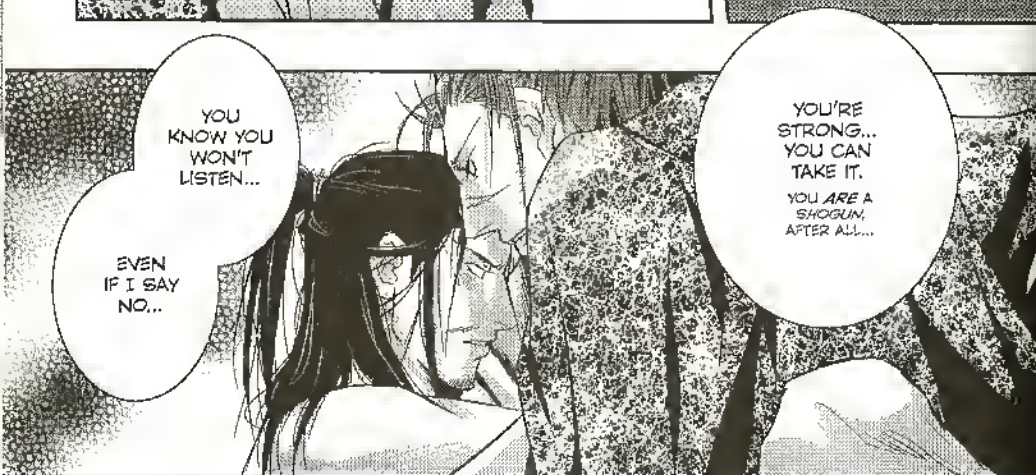
I
WOULD
NOT!!

NO —
YOU SEEM
LIKE YOU'D
CRY IF I
TOOK IT
AWAY.



...YUE LAN.

IT
HURTS...!



EVEN
IF I SAY
NO...

YOU
KNOW YOU
WON'T
LISTEN...

YOU'RE
STRONG...
YOU CAN
TAKE IT.
YOU ARE A
SHOGUN,
AFTER ALL...



UHH...!

SQUEEZE



DON'T
JOKE AT A
TIME LIKE
THIS...

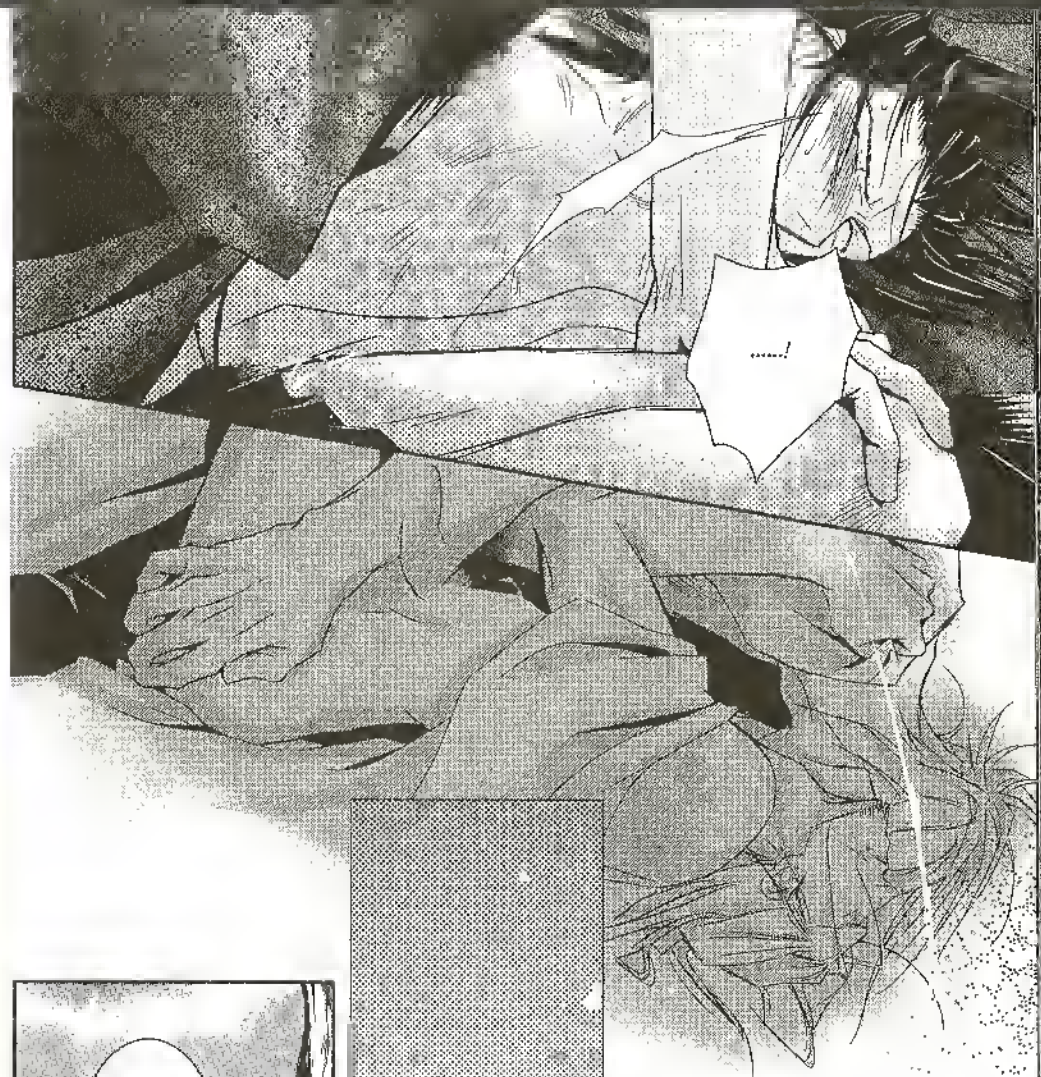
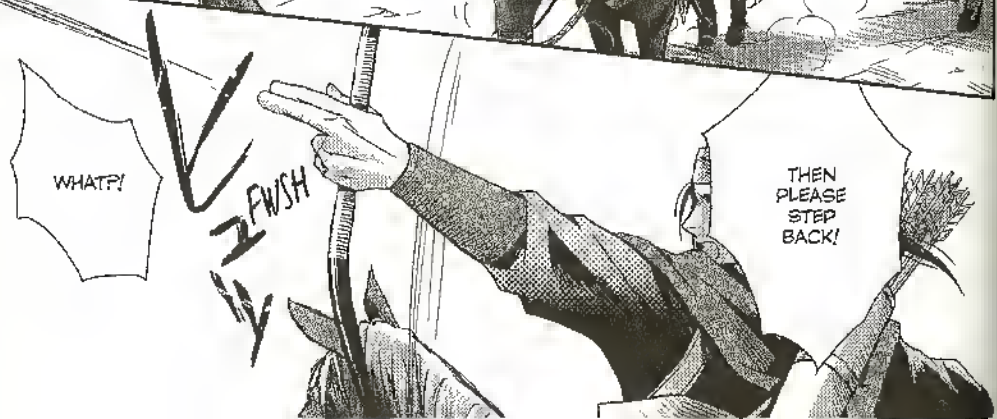
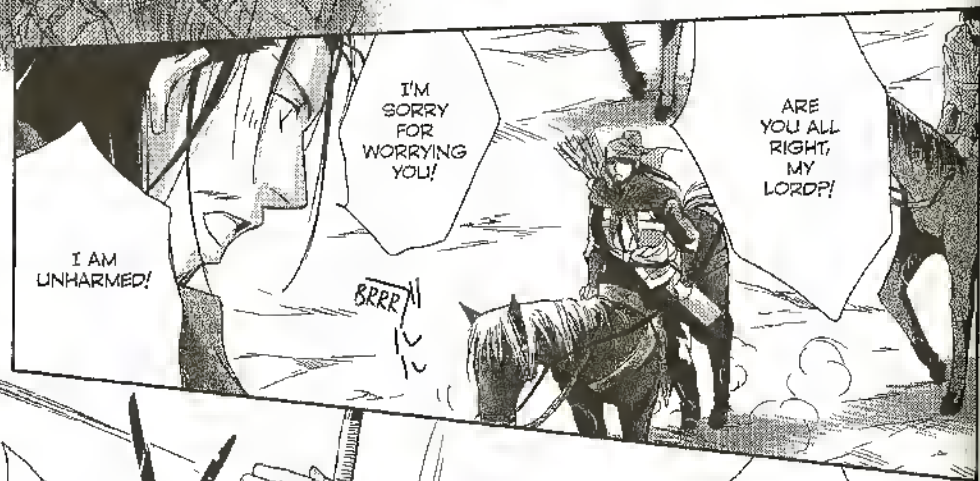
HANG IN
THERE,
SHOGUN.

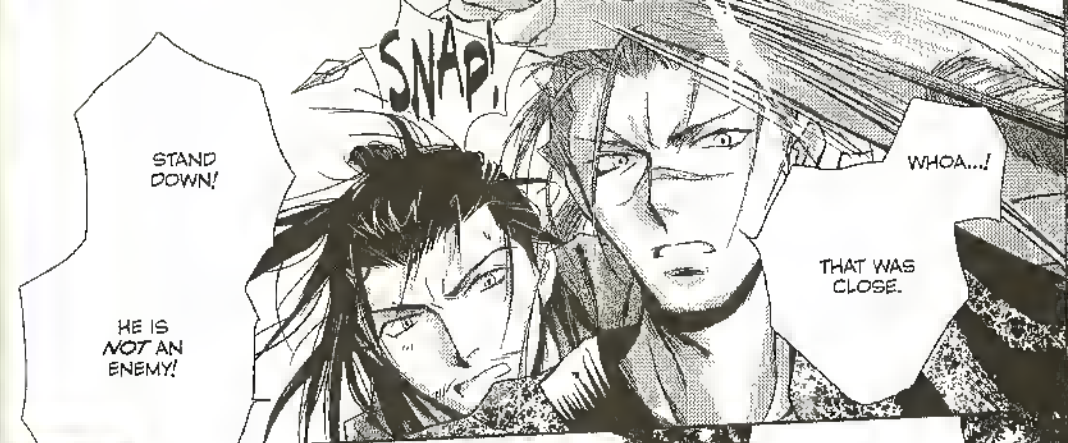
Y-YOU
FOOL...!



THEN
WHAT DO
I CALL
YOU?

.....
IT'S
YUE LAN.





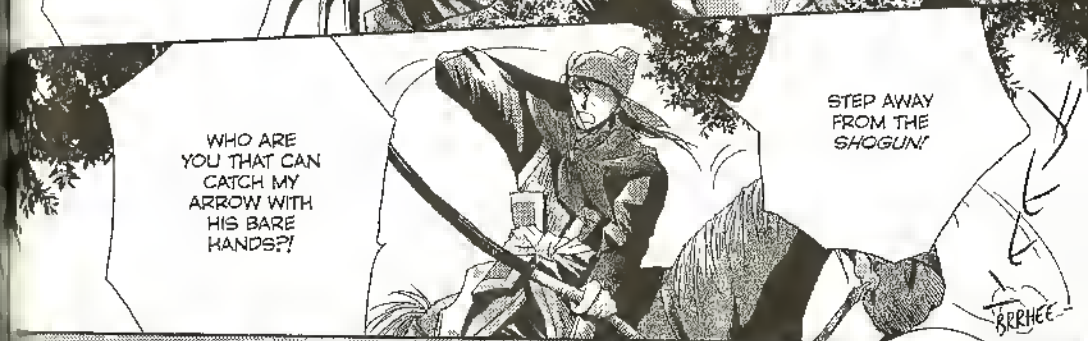
STAND
DOWN!

HE IS
NOT AN
ENEMY!

SNAP!

WHOA...!

THAT WAS
CLOSE.



WHO ARE
YOU THAT CAN
CATCH MY
ARROW WITH
HIS BARE
HANDS?!

STEP AWAY
FROM THE
SHOGUN!

BRREE



HEY!
LET ME
DO THE
TALKING!

I'LL JOIN
YOU,
STARTING
TODAY.

THE
SHOGUN
SAYS IT'S
OKAY.

WHAT?
SHOGUN,
WHO IS
THIS MAN?

◆END◆



GO,
ZHANG
LIAO!

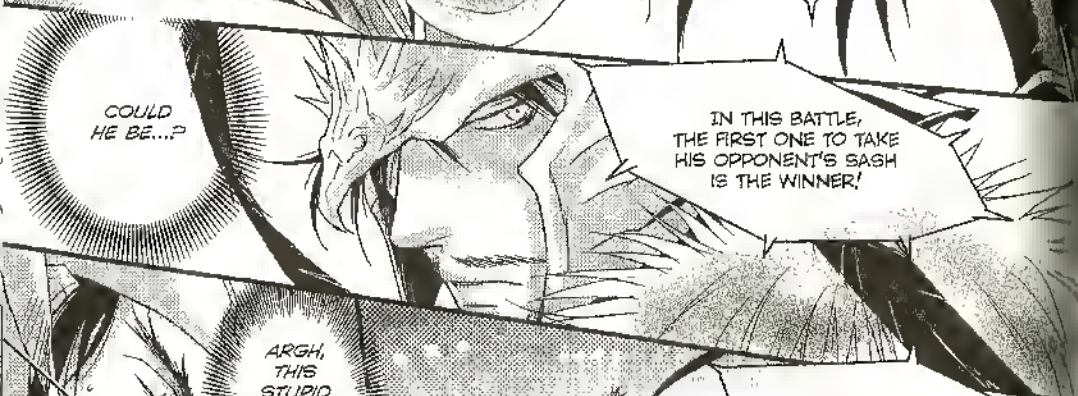
GO,
ZHANG
LIAO!

ALSO FROM
SŌTEN
WARRIORS 2,
ZHANG
LIAO - !

WAIT A
MINUTE -
THIS
ZHANG
LIAO...

"THE
ANONY-
MOUS
SHOGUN"
...?!

PLAYED BY
(COSPLAY
NAME) THE
ANONYMOUS
SHOGUN!



COULD
HE BE...?

IN THIS BATTLE,
THE FIRST ONE TO TAKE
HIS OPPONENT'S SASH
IS THE WINNER!



ARGH,
THIS
STUPID
BEARD IS
IN THE
WAY!

FIGHT!



IN THE
BLUE
CORNER,
THE
BEARDED
WARRIOR

OUR FIRST
MATCH OF
THE DAY
IS NONE
OTHER THAN
A REAL-LIFE
SŌTEN
BATTLE!

FROM
SŌTEN
WARRIORS 2
- GUAN
YUNCHANG,
PLAYED BY
HAYABUSA-
KUN!

GUAN
YU!

WELCOME TO
"COSPLAY
FIGHTING
EXPLOSION"!

GUAN
YU!

AND MY
BEARD'S
ALREADY
COMING
OFF...

UH...
I CAN'T
MOVE TOO
WELL IN
THIS
COSTUME...

GO - !
PRINCE OF
THE BEAUTIFUL
BEARD!



IN THE RED
CORNER - !

BUT I
THINK HE'S
A SEASONED
VETERAN,
SO DON'T
WORRY.

HAYABUSA!
YOUR
SCHEDULED
OPPONENT
HAS BEEN
SWAPPED
OUT!

KNOWN
AS THE
NIGHTMARE
OF
HEPEI - !

SERIOUSLY?
WHAT WAS
THE POINT OF
REHEARSAL,
THEN?
WHO IS IT?!

PLEASE,
NO RUNNING AT
A CONVENTION

WHOA,
LOOK!
GUAN
YU'S
RUNNING!

MAY I
HAVE A
PHOTO?

PARDON
ME,
COMING
THROUGH

SORRY,
MAYBE
LATER!

DASH

WHA...
GONE
ALREADY?
WHAT
A HASTY
EXIT!

OOH,
REAL-LIFE
SENRIKO.

WHOA!

BEARD?!

MEN'S DRESSING
ROOM ENTER!

HEY, I'M
LOOKING
FOR THE
ZHANG LIAO
IN THAT
LAST
MATCH...

OOPS.

BUM!

WHSH!

BUT IT'S
MUCH TOO
HEAVY!

NICE
BEARD.

AAH!

OH -
THANKS.

GUAN YU
DISAPPOINTS!
WHAT OF HIS
"BEARD
POWER?"!

RAAH -

AND
ZHANG LIAO
TAKES
THE SASH!
TKO!
PERFECT!

FORGET
THIS -
I NEED TO
TALK TO
THAT ZHANG
LIAO...

I'M
IMPRESSED!
WITH
TUAN FU.

SHUT UP!
HOW CAN
A BEARD
HAVE
"POWER"?!
AND HOW
COULD
ANYONE
MOVE
AROUND
DRESSED
LIKE THIS?!

Boo!!

Boo!!

Boo!!



I'VE BEEN... STAYING AWAY FROM THIS STUFF LATELY.

OH... YEAH, I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM FOR AWHILE.

...SINCE I HADN'T SEEN YOU WITH WASHIZAKI-SAN.

I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU'D RETIRED OR SOMETHING...

WOW, YOU LOOK REALLY DIFFERENT WITHOUT THE COSTUME —

I HADN'T SEEN YOU AROUND FOR AWHILE, SO I WONDERED WHAT HAPPENED...



OH — WAIT! COULD I AT LEAST GET YOUR E-MAIL...

WELL, SEE YA.

EVER SINCE HE STOPPED ALL ACTIVITY, DEMAND FOR HIS OLDER WORK'S HAS SKYROCKETED, ALL SELLING AT A PREMIUM...
THE HEAVENS HAVE TRULY GIFTED HIM!

AND NOW IT TURNS OUT HE WAS THIS COSPLAY SUPERSTAR?!

HOW'D YOU LIKE TO DO ANOTHER CON TOGETHER?

BUT THIS WAS SAID TO BE MADE BY THE MOST ACCLAIMED MODEL WEAPONS MAKER IN THE COSPLAY INDUSTRY! (IT WAS SO EXPENSIVE...)



WHAT?! ARE YOU SERIOUS?!

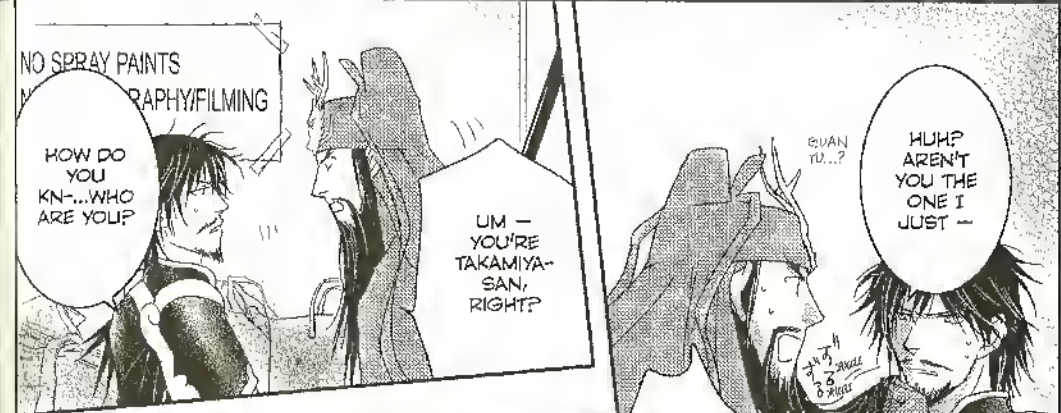
HUH?

IF YOU KNOW MY WEB PAGE ADDRESS, I'D RATHER YOU CONTACT ME THERE.

I'LL WRITE YOU BACK.

THAT YAN YUE DAO... IT'S ONE OF MINE.

DID YOU BUY THAT ON AUCTION SOMEWHERE?



NO SPRAY PAINTS
PHOTOGRAPHY/FILMING

HOW DO YOU KN...WHO ARE YOU?

UM — YOU'RE TAKAMIYA-SAN, RIGHT?

EVAN TU...?

HUHP AREN'T YOU THE ONE I JUST —



OF COURSE I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE TOTALLY FAMOUS AMONG COSPLAYERS!

OH — ! I FOUND YOU!



UH, YEAH...

ANYWAY, COULD I GET A PHOTO WITH YOU? BEFORE YOU CHANGE OUT OF COSTUME?!

ISN'T THIS YOUR FIRST APPEARANCE AT A CON IN A WHILE?!

OH, PARDON ME — MY NAME'S HAYABUSA.

IT'S MY REAL NAME



TAKAMIYA-SAN USED TO BE A DUO WITH ANOTHER WELL-KNOWN COSPLAYER, WASHIZAKI-SAN.

OH, DON'T WORRY. I'VE GOT TONS OF THE STUFF.

SURE... IF YOU'LL LEND ME SOME OF YOUR BEARD-REMOVING SOLUTION AFTERWARDS...

I FORGOT TO BRING SOME...

THEY APPEARED AT EVERY CON AND FEST, AND ON EVERY COSPLAY MAGAZINE COVER TOGETHER...





AS
LU BL

WHOA...
IT'S
WASHIZAKI-
SAN...

I
THOUGHT
YOU'D
WASHED
YOUR
HANDS
OF THIS
BUSINESS.

IT'S
BEEN A
WHILE,
TAKAMIYA...

SORRY,
I'M NOT
ACCEPTING
ANY COSTUME
ORDERS AT
THE MOMENT.

IF YOU'RE
WORKING
AGAIN,
THERE'S
ANOTHER
COMMISSION
I'D LIKE
TO ASK OF
YOU.

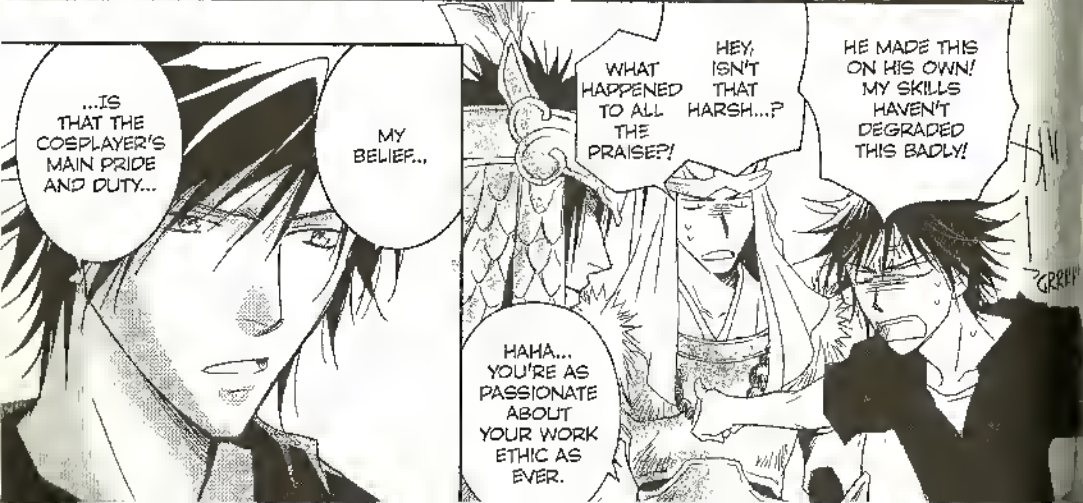
SORRY...
BUT YOU'LL
HAVE TO
ASK
SOMEONE
ELSE.

THAT'S NO
WAY TO
TREAT AN
OLD FRIEND.
IS IT?

EVEN
THOUGH
YOU DID
THIS
GUY'S
COSTUME.

WU SONG
FROM
SUIKODEN,
EHP?

HOW
CAN YOU
WEAR THAT
THING IN
THIS HEAT?



...IS
THAT THE
COSPLAYER'S
MAIN PRIDE
AND DUTY...

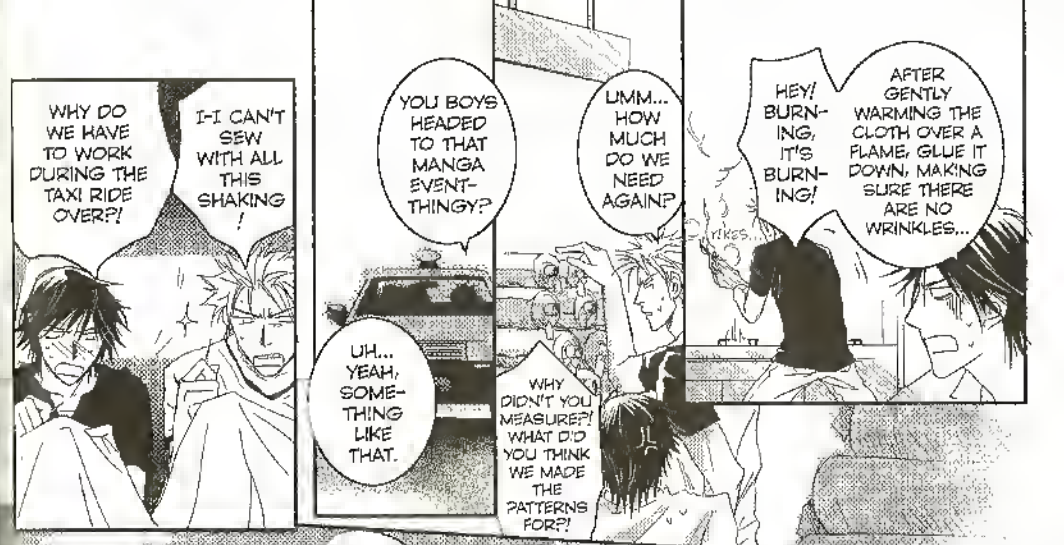
MY
BELIEF...

WHAT
HAPPENED
TO ALL
THE
PRAISE?

HEY,
ISN'T
THAT
HARSH...?

HE MADE THIS
ON HIS OWN!
MY SKILLS
HAVEN'T
DEGRADED
THIS BADLY!

HAHA...
YOU'RE AS
PASSIONATE
ABOUT
YOUR WORK
ETHIC AS
EVER.



WHY DO
WE HAVE
TO WORK
DURING THE
TAXI RIDE
OVER?!

I-I CAN'T
SEW
WITH ALL
THIS
SHAKING!

YOU BOYS
HEADED
TO THAT
MANGA
EVENT-
THINGY?

UMM...
HOW
MUCH
DO WE
NEED
AGAIN?

HEY!
BURN-
ING,
IT'S
BURN-
ING!

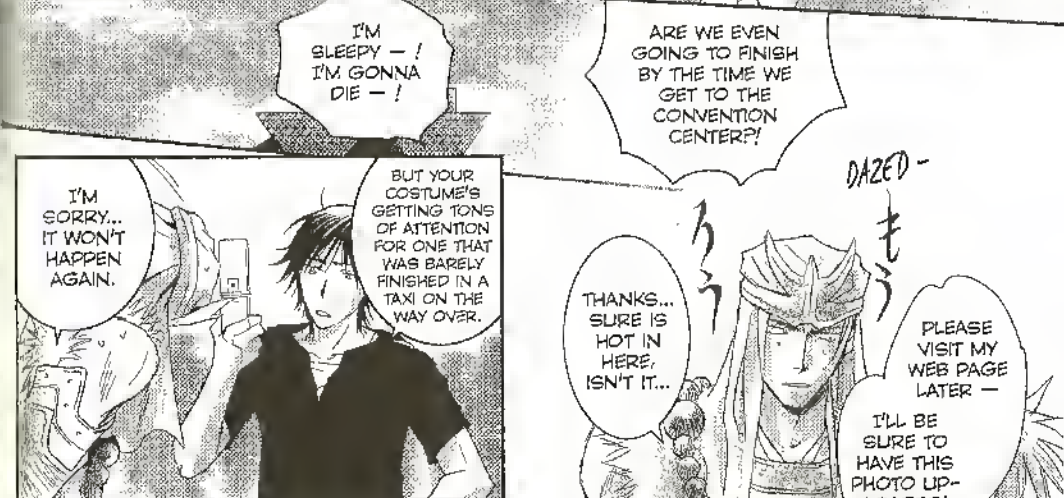
AFTER
GENTLY
WARMING THE
CLOTH OVER A
FLAME, GLUE IT
DOWN, MAKING
SURE THERE
ARE NO
WRINKLES...

UH...
YEAH,
SOME-
THING
LIKE
THAT.

WHY
DIDN'T YOU
MEASURE?
WHAT DID
YOU THINK
WE MADE
THE
PATTERNS
FOR?!

I'M
SLEEPY - !
I'M GONNA
DIE - !

ARE WE EVEN
GOING TO FINISH
BY THE TIME WE
GET TO THE
CONVENTION
CENTER?!



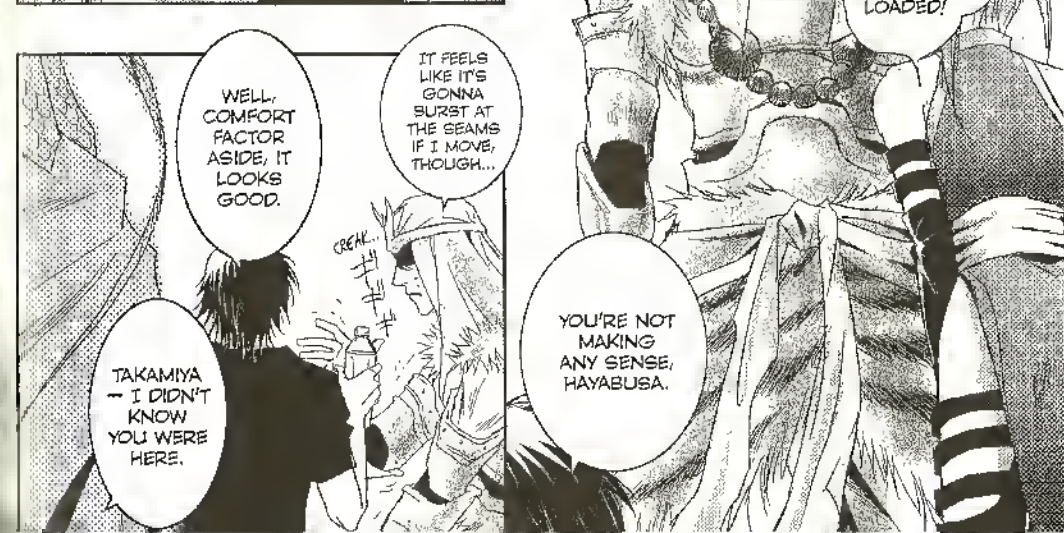
I'M
SORRY...
IT WON'T
HAPPEN
AGAIN.

BUT YOUR
COSTUME'S
GETTING TONS
OF ATTENTION
FOR ONE THAT
WAS BARELY
FINISHED IN A
TAXI ON THE
WAY OVER.

THANKS...
SURE IS
HOT IN
HERE,
ISN'T IT...

PLEASE
VISIT MY
WEB PAGE
LATER -

I'LL BE
SURE TO
HAVE THIS
PHOTO UP-
LOADED!

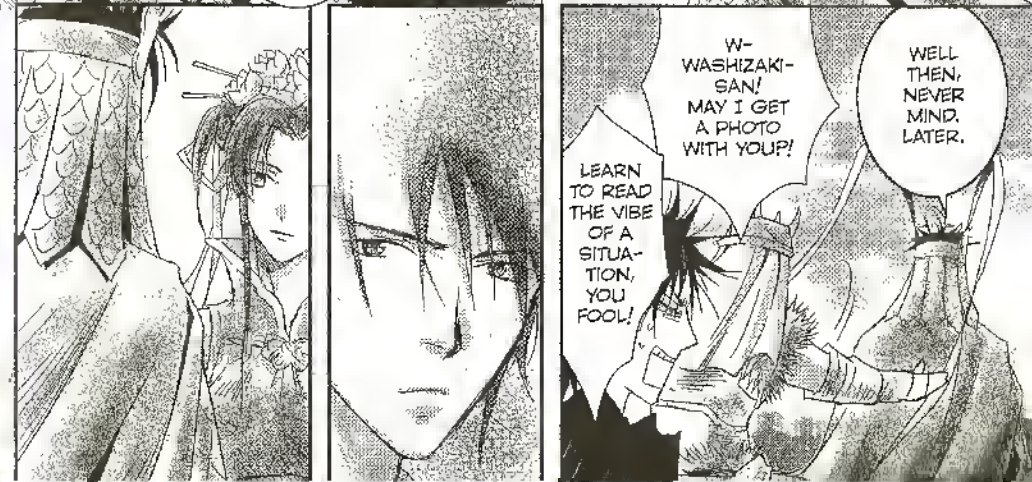
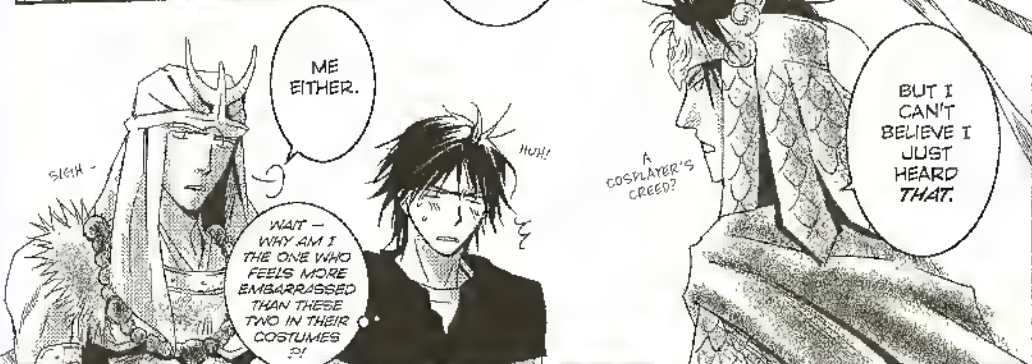
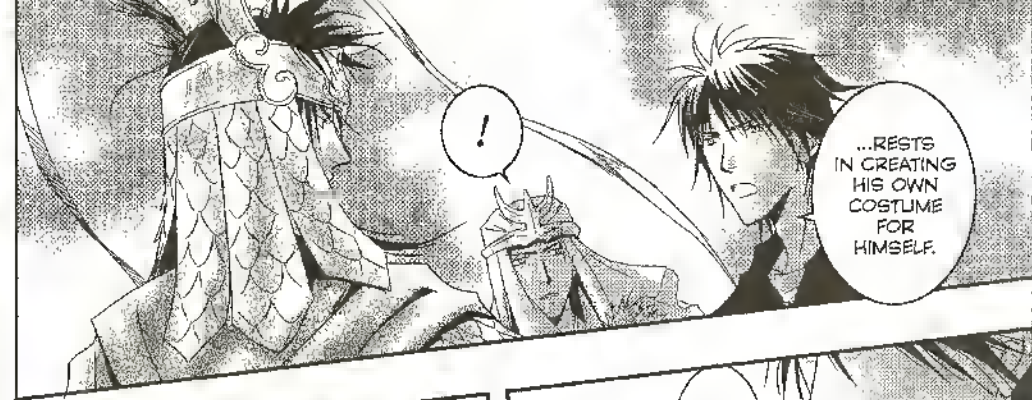
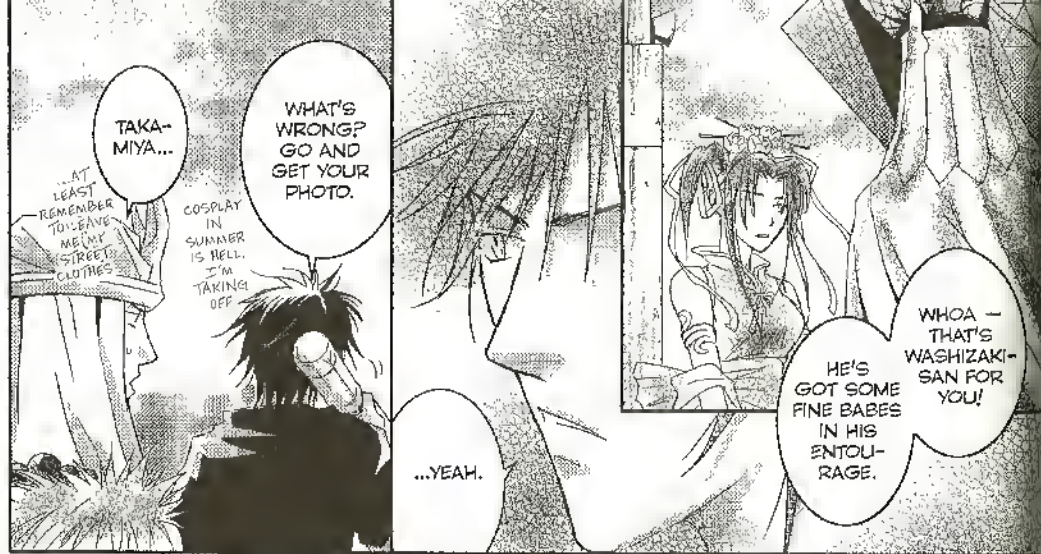


WELL,
COMFORT
FACTOR
ASIDE, IT
LOOKS
GOOD.

IT FEELS
LIKE IT'S
GONNA
BURST AT
THE SEAMS
IF I MOVE,
THOUGH...

TAKAMIYA
- I DIDN'T
KNOW
YOU WERE
HERE.

YOU'RE NOT
MAKING
ANY SENSE,
HAYABUSA.





I SEARCHED FOR YOU PRETTY SERIOUSLY.

I RECOGNIZED YOU RIGHT OFF AT THAT LAST MATCH — EVEN WITH YOUR BEARD.



IT'S JUST COSPLAY...

I-IT'S NOT LIKE I DID TONS OF THEM...

IT WAS QUITE A SHOCK FOR ME WHEN YOU STOPPED APPEARING AT EVENTS, YOU KNOW.



W-WHOA! THE MASTER'S SMILED FOR THE FIRST TIME!!!

HEH...MY BEARD WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO YOURS, I RECALL.

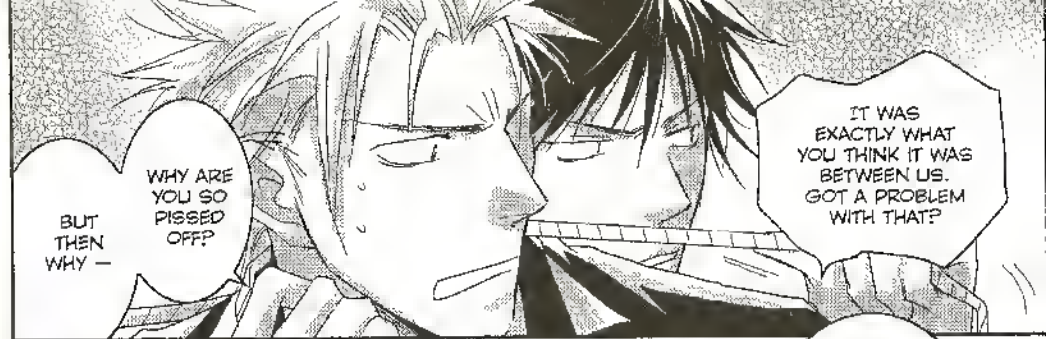


I'M GLAD YOU'RE THE ONE WHO ENDED UP WITH IT.



I WAS SURPRISED THAT TIME, TOO. I NEVER IMAGINED THAT MY OPPONENT...

...WOULD BE WIELDING THE WEAPON I MADE.



BUT THEN WHY —

WHY ARE YOU SO PISSED OFF?

IT WAS EXACTLY WHAT YOU THINK IT WAS BETWEEN US. GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?



ALL I WAS TO HIM WAS HIS PERSONAL COSTUME PROP ARTIST.

BUT IN THE END...

AS YOU SAW, WASHIZAKI MAKES A GREAT MODEL, SO IT WAS FUN WORKING FOR HIM.

AND THAT'S ALL.



AND I... JUST GOT TIRED OF THE WHOLE THING.

IT MIGHT BE THE SAME WITH ME, TOO...

BUT SO WHAT? WHO CARES WHAT THE REASON IS?

I MUST HAVE BEEN IN LOVE... NOT WITH HIM, BUT WITH THE CHARACTERS HE PORTRAYED.

THIS SOUNDS REALLY STUPID, BUT THINKING BACK ON IT NOW —



...!



YIPE...

W-WHAT'S
WITH THE
REACTION?!

YOU'RE
MAKING
ME
ANXIOUS!

...WHA...



UH...IT'S
JUST -

I CAN'T
HOLD
MYSELF
BACK
ANYMORE...

AND I CAN'T
KEEP
MYSELF
FROM
THINKING -



SORRY...!

SHOVE!

WHAT A
FOOL THAT
WASHIZAKI-
SAN IS.

UNNH...!

W-
WAIT -...

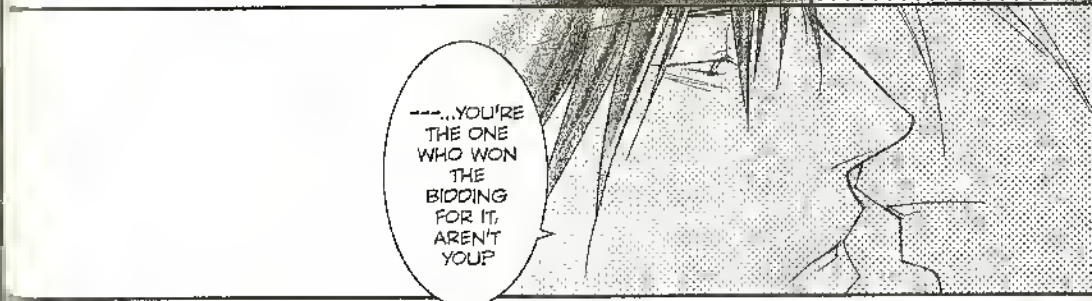


UMM...
SO DOES
THAT MEAN
I CAN
KEEP IT?

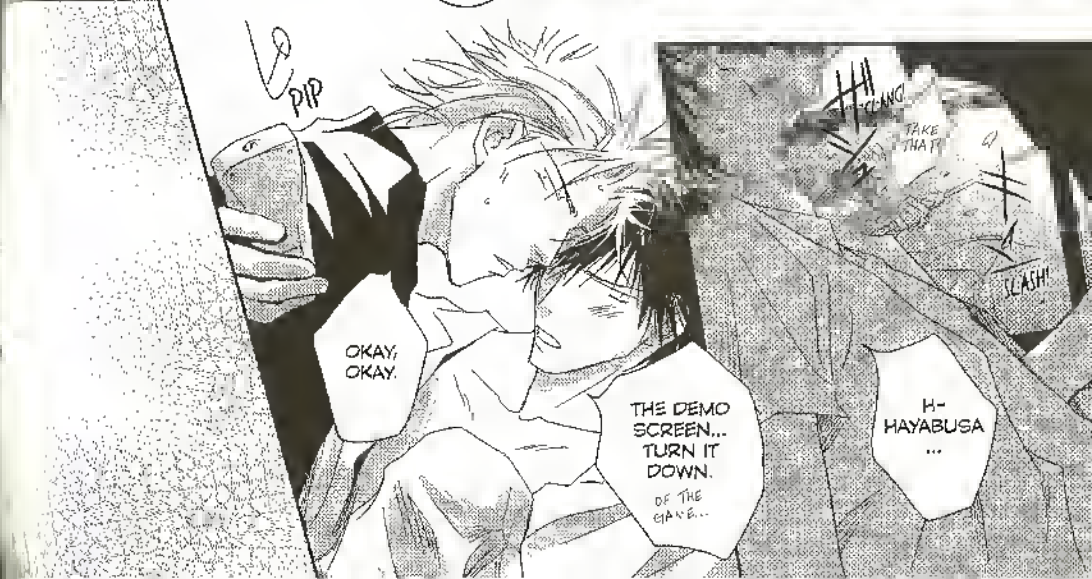
WHAT
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?

...--NOT
ANYMORE.

I DON'T
THINK I
COULD
MAKE ONE
BETTER
THAN THAT...



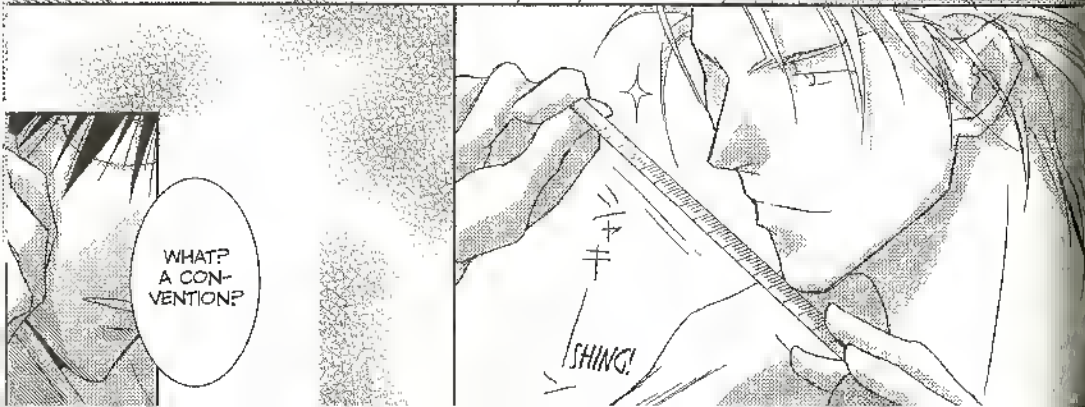
---...YOU'RE
THE ONE
WHO WON
THE
BIDDING
FOR IT,
AREN'T YOU?



OKAY,
OKAY.

THE DEMO
SCREEN...
TURN IT
DOWN.
OF THE
GAME...

H-
HAYABUSA
...





HUH?
WHERE?

NAH...
CUZ I'VE
ALREADY
GOT A
MAGA-
MUNE.



I DON'T
SEE HOW
YOU MADE
THIS, SINCE
THERE ARE
ONLY A
COUPLE OF
GAME
TRAILERS
TO USE
AS IMAGE
REFER-
ENCES.

KOJYURŌ
KAGETSUNA,
EH...?
SO, YOU
WENT FOR
THE
BRAND-NEW
CHARACTER.

I
WINGED IT...
I'LL FIX THE
DETAILS
LATER.

WANT ME
TO TAKE A
PHOTO OF YOU
WITH SOMEONE
DRESSED AS
MASAMUNE?
THERE SHOULD
BE A MILLION
OF 'EM
AROUND.



HERE.

WHAT?!



NO
WORRIES,
THEY'VE
GOT
CLOAK-
ROOMS
TODAY.

URK!
I FORGOT
ABOUT
THAT...

D-DON'T
BE SILLY!
I CAME HERE
AS YOUR
BAGGAGE
CARRIER...

DON'T
WORRY, I
BROUGHT
YOUR
COSTUME.

IF YOU
DON'T OBEY,
I'LL RAPE YOU
RIGHT HERE,
IN FRONT OF
EVERYONE -
IN THIS
COSTUME,
TOO!

CUT IT
OUT, I SAID
I'M NOT

ANYWAYS -
STRIP!



NEW
COSTUME
?

PERK!

KAGETSUNA,
FROM
BATTLE OF
HEAVENLY
CHAMPIONS
3!

I'VE
GOT A
NEW
COSTUME
AND
EVERY-
THING.



NO,
I'VE HAD
ENOUGH
OF
THOSE.

OH,
COME
ON.

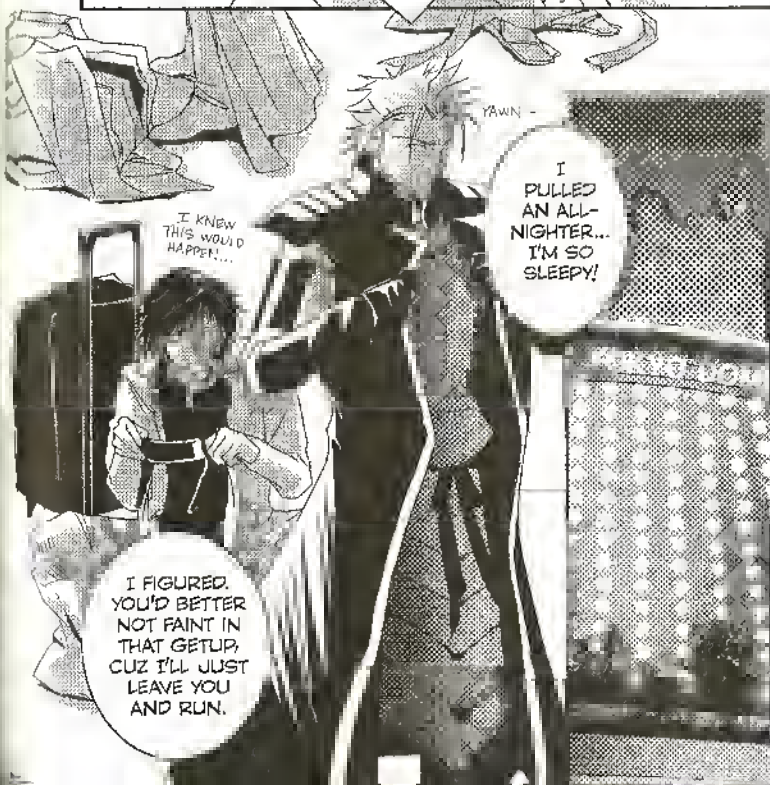


WHO
ARE YOU
CALLING
"MASTER"
?
BUT I ADMIT
YOU'VE
PIQUED MY
CURIOSITY...

I MADE IT
MYSELF
AND
EVERY-
THING!
PRAISE ME,
MASTER!

PLAN?
YOU
SURE
ABOUT
THAT?

THE
COSTUME
WILL BE
FINISHED BY
TONIGHT...
OR AT LEAST,
THAT'S THE
PLAN...



I KNEW
THIS WOULD
HAPPEN...

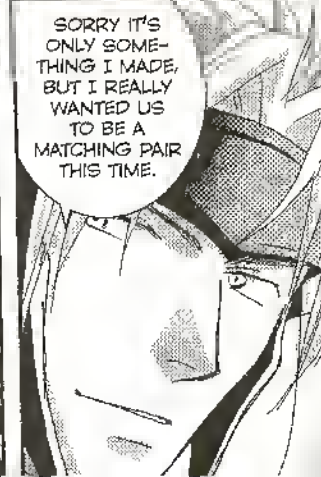
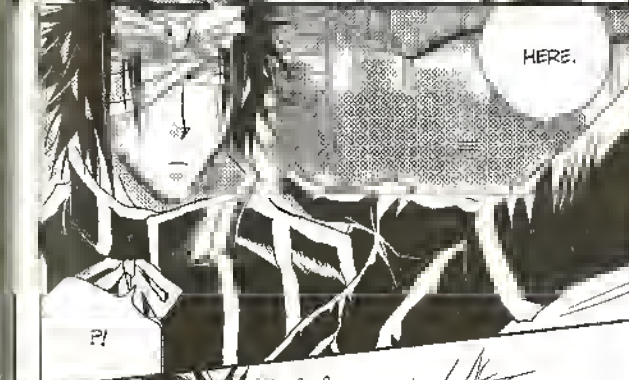
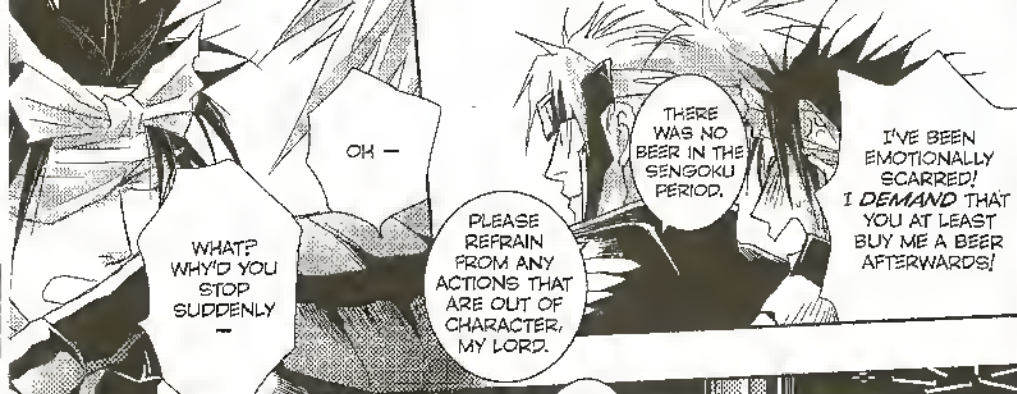
I
PULLED
AN ALL-
NIGHTER...
I'M SO
SLEEPY!

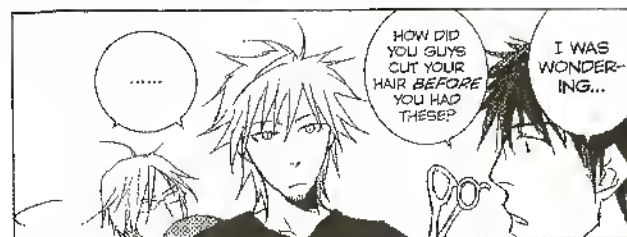
I FIGURED
YOU'D BETTER
NOT FAINT IN
THAT GETUP,
CUZ I'LL JUST
LEAVE YOU
AND RUN.



THEN IT'S
DECIDED!
I'LL E-MAIL
YOU THE TIME
AND OTHER
DETAILS LATER!
SEE YA!

HEY!
WAIT A
-...!



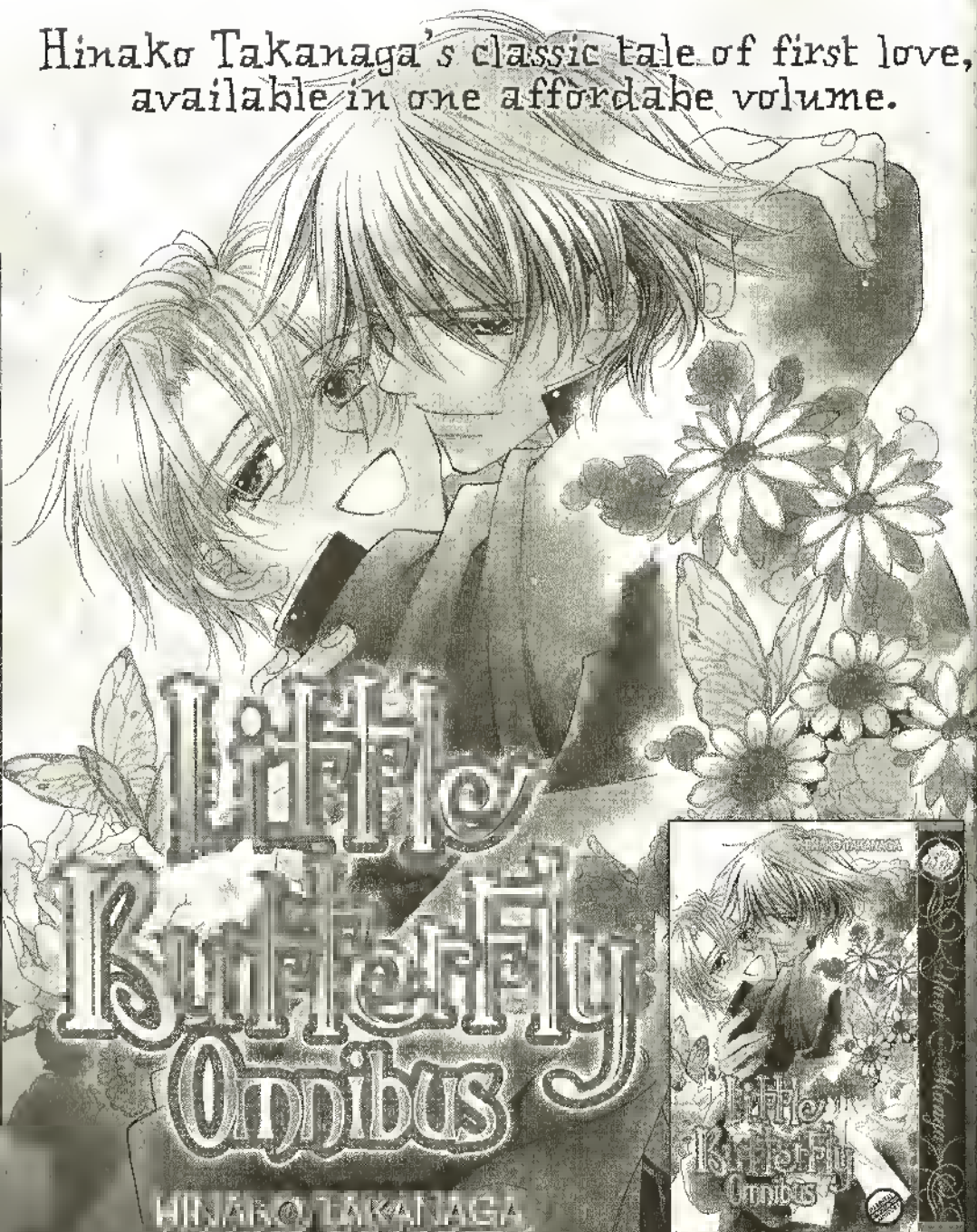


...AND SO, IT'S RATHER AN ODD LINE-UP, BUT THANK YOU FOR READING. I EAGERLY AWAIT ANY OPINIONS, COMMENTS, OR TESTIMONIES ABOUT ANY BEAUTIFUL BEARDS YOU'VE SEEN LATELY!



◆END◆

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HOW TO SEDUCE A VAMPIRE

吸血鬼に愛される方法

TRANSLATION NOTES

PAGE 41, PANEL 6: "THIS IS THE ONLY GAG I COULD THINK OF IN THIS SITUATION..."

WATANABE'S JOKE IS IN REFERENCE TO THE BEHAVIOR OF A NEWLYWED BRIDE BOWING TO HER HUSBAND BEFORE THEIR FIRST NIGHT IN BED TOGETHER-HE'S JOKINGLY TRYING TO PLAY OFF MIZUO'S SARCASTIC REFERRAL OF HIM AS "DEAR".

PAGE 44, PANEL 3: "PLEASE, NO, MY LORD!"

WATANABE IS AGAIN REFERRING TO A CLICHE' SITUATION IN SAMURAI STORIES, WHERE THE EVIL OFFICIAL IN CHARGE (A *DAIKAN*, AN EDO-AREA LOCAL ADMINISTRATOR) ALWAYS ABUSES HIS POWER BY DEMANDING TO RAVISH A YOUNG LOCAL GIRL (IN LIEU OF TAX PAYMENTS OR SOME SUCH); IT USUALLY CONTAINS A SCENE OF THE MAN PULLING THE RESISTING GIRL'S KIMONO AND SASH OFF, THE UNWINDING OF WHICH CAUSES HER TO TWIRL (SOMEWHAT COMICALLY) LIKE A TOP.

PAGE 61: "DAIMYO"

A *DAIMYO* WAS A JAPANESE FEUDAL LORD. UNDER THE *SHOGUN*, THEY WERE THE SECOND-MOST POWERFUL PRIVATE LANDOWNERS IN FEUDAL JAPAN AROUND THE 19TH CENTURY.

PAGE 137: STROBE LIGHTS

THE MANGAKA IS OBVIOUSLY A FAN OF COSPLAY OF VIDEO GAME CHARACTERS BUILT AROUND JAPANESE/CHINESE HISTORICAL FIGURES. THE ONES HERE FIGURE MOST PROMINENTLY FROM THE ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS BASED GAMES (LIKE *DYNASTY WARRIORS*).

PAGE 141, PANEL 3: "OOH, REAL LIFE SENRIKO".

THE JOKE HERE IS THAT GUAN YU IS IN HIS CHINESE WARRIOR GARB RUNNING THROUGH THE CONVENTION HALL, PROMPTING ONE OF THE ATTENDEES TO NOTE THAT HE'S DOING A "SENRIKO", OR VERY LONG JOURNEY. THE TERM COMES FROM A FAMOUS CHINESE PHRASE, "A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND LI STARTS BENEATH ONE'S FEET", OR AS IT'S TRANSLATED IN ENGLISH, "A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP". *SENRIKO* CAN LITERALLY BE TRANSLATED AS, "THOUSAND MILE JOURNEY".